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

Lizzie Borden Took an Ax, Gave Her Mother 40 Whacks

The West Coast Premiere of **LIZZIE**, a new Musical Based on the Life of Lizzie Borden, Runs May 30 – June 29, with Previews Beginning May 24

“Presented with wall-rattling glee ... deliciously watchable ... rock ‘n’ roll ‘n’ axe-murdering prove to be a pretty tasty combination.”

– *The New York Times*



April 28, 2014 – PORTLAND, ORE. The West Coast premiere of **LIZZIE**, the musical about the legendary ax murderer Lizzie Borden, **begins previews May 24, opens on May 30, and runs through June 29 on the Main Stage.** Four dynamite rock mavens will make their PCS debuts: **Mary Kate Morrissey, Leslie McDonel, Carrie Cimma and Kacie Sheik.** They’ll be backed by a band featuring **Scott Weddle, Matt Brown, Greg Eklund, Sean Vinson and Dale Tolliver.** **Rose Riordan** will direct the mayhem, with Musical Director **James Beaton** bringing the epic rock score to life. **Portland-based Broadway producers Brisa Trincherro and Corey Brunish** helped develop this musical.

Regular tickets start at \$38. Preview tickets start at \$34. Rush tickets are \$20. Showtimes are 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sundays (excluding June 8, 22 and 24); 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; matinees at noon on select Thursdays. Tickets can be purchased at pcs.org or 503.445.3700. A complete schedule can be found online: <http://www.pcs.org/lizzie/>.

LIZZIE is a rock-show retelling of the bloody legend of America's favorite ax-wielding double-murderess and Victorian hometown girl. Lizzie Borden, who has become fodder for jump rope rhymes and TV movies of the week, was a Massachusetts woman acquitted in 1892 of the ax murders of her father and stepmother, and lived the rest of her life as America's first infamous tabloid star. But did she really do it? And if so, how?

LIZZIE features music and lyrics by **Steven Cheslik-DeMeyer**; books, lyrics, and additional music by **Tim Maner**; with music and additional lyrics by **Alan Stevens Hewitt**. The creators drew from the history of Lizzie Borden for inspiration and raw material, using actual dialogue from the infamous trials in the lyrics. *LIZZIE* is inspired by the great rock spectacles of the 70s (Ozzy Osbourne, Alice Cooper, Kiss) along with generations of women rockers (Grace Slick, Tina Turner, Heart, Patti Smith, Joan Jett, Wendy O. Williams, the Riot Grrls). *LIZZIE*'s sound owes less to Andrew Lloyd Webber and Stephen Sondheim, and more to Heart, Nirvana, Led Zeppelin, the Beatles, Radiohead and the Runaways.

This musical was first produced as *Lizzie Borden* in 1990 at the tiny mythic theatre company in New York, followed by a staging by the producing organization HERE. The show was then expanded into a full-length, two-act musical in 2006 and premiered at the Living Theatre in 2009, where *Show Business Weekly* said, "We came for splattered red, for madness and mayhem, and *Lizzie Borden* more than delivers." *Lizzie Borden* was nominated for three Drama Desk Awards and included in *The Advocate's* "Top Ten of 2009."

In 2010, a 45-minute reading was presented under the title *LIZZIE* at the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals. It was further developed at Village Theatre's Festival of New Musicals in Washington. In 2013, *LIZZIE* enjoyed a full staging in Houston at Theatre Under the Star's new series TUTS Underground. *LIZZIE*'s European premiere kicked off earlier this year at the Fredericia Teater in Denmark, prompting one Danish blogger, Gregers Dirckinck-Holmfeld, to rave, "A resoundingly full and gory rock musical. ... The earth probably rumbles as much during the Roskilde Festival as the floors do in Fredericia Theatre, when the bass guitar takes hold of *LIZZIE*." *LIZZIE* was developed, in part, by Portland-based Broadway producer Brisa Trincherro (Make Musicals) and Corey Brunish.

A *LIZZIE* studio album was released in October of 2013, featuring **Carrie Cimme**, who will star in the Portland Center Stage production singing the role of Bridget, and **Portland's own Storm Large**, singing the

role of Emma Borden. David Clarke, recordings critic for BroadwayWorld.com, included the album in his **Top 10 Theater-Related Recordings of 2013**, saying “I couldn’t be more blown away. From the straining and broken opening chords of the prologue to the gleefully riotous curtain music, [*LIZZIE*] will leave you grinning from ear to ear. This musical has all the right ammunition and attitude to make the modern rock sound feel perfectly at home in its 1892 setting.” The studio album is now available as a Danish-import-only vinyl gatefold double-LP.



Playing the woman who turned her own infamy into an ascension to legend is **Mary Kate Morrissey** as **Lizzie Borden**. Morrissey recently played Sheila in the international tour of *Hair* and performed in *The Everleigh Club* at The Public Theater with Portland’s own Storm Large and James Beaton. She’s also performed in concert venues such as the Rockwood Music Hall, (Le) Poisson Rouge, 54 Below and Lincoln Center.

Leslie McDonel will play her older sister, **Emma Borden**. McDonel shared the stage with Billie Joe Armstrong in the Original Broadway Cast of *American Idiot* as an ensemble member, and she also performed the role of Heather for the national tour. Other Broadway productions include *Hairspray* (Lou Ann, u/s Amber, Female Authority Figure) and *Legally Blonde* (Kate/Chutney, u/s Vivienne, Enid, Serena).



Carrie Cimma will play **Bridget Sullivan** (Maggie) the Borden’s resentful Irish maid. She was nominated for a Drama Desk Award (Best Featured Actress in a Musical) for her portrayal of Bridget in *Lizzie Borden* at The Living Theater in 2009, earning acclaim from *The New York Times*: “Carrie Cimma, in a cocksure performance that ties the whole thing together, is the Bordens’ Irish maid.” Cimma also played Bridget in the recent production in Houston. The *Houston Chronicle* called her “dynamite” and “a hoot as the surly and sarcastic maid Bridget.”

The Borden's next door neighbor **Alice Russell** will be played by **Kacie Sheik**. Sheik recently performed Jeanie in the Tony Award-winning revival of *Hair – The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, both on Broadway and in the National Tour. She earned a Helen Hayes nomination for Best Actress for the role. Prior to that, she starred as Scaramouche in the American premiere of Queen's *We Will Rock You*.



Rose Riordan will bring this murderous rock show inspired musical to life. As PCS's Associate Artistic Director, Riordan has become known for her delightfully dark stagings, including *The Pillowman*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Thugs*. Returning to PCS after a hit run as Musical Director and Keyboard player for *Crazy Enough* is **James Beaton**, who will once again act as Musical Director. Kicking out the jams will be **Scott Weddle**, Guitar 1, (drums for *Crazy Enough*; Storm Large, Amelia and the Flat Irons); **Matt Brown**, Guitar and Keys (recently released an album with his trio, Matt Brown and the Connection); **Greg Eklund**, Drums (Everclear, the Oohlas, Storm Large); **Sean Vinson**, Bass (Bass for *Fiddler on the Roof*; Wildwish); **Dale Tolliver**, Cello (cello for *Fiddler on the Roof*; performed with Marilyn Horne, Susannah Mars, Hermione Gingold, Itzhak Perlman).

Melding the Victorian and rock worlds are **Scenic and Lighting Designer Daniel Meeker** (most recently *The Last Five Years* and *Bo-Nita*; lighting design for the Pickathon Festival, among others); Resident **Costume Designer Jeff Cone** (who's 50th production at the Armory was *The Last Five Years*); and **Sound Designer Cecil Averett** (PCS debut). PCS's Producing Associate **Brandon Woolley will act as Assistant Director**, joined by **Stage Manager Mark Tynan** (most recently *Chinglish* and *Bo-Nita*) and **Production Assistant Kristen Mun** (production assistant for *Fiddler on the Roof*).

➤ **Next Page: Related Events**

RELATED EVENTS – Calendar Editors Kindly Note:

SHOP TALK: *LIZZIE*

Tuesday, June 3 | 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Gerding Theater at the Armory, Mezzanine Lobby

Free and open to the public. No ticket required.

Special guests from our production department will be on hand to give away secrets of the stage magic used in this production. Shop Talk is held in the lobby before the first Tuesday evening performance of every Main Stage production.

SOUNDS.LIKE.PORTLAND: *LIZZIE*

Saturday evenings throughout the run | 6:45-7:15 p.m.

Gerding Theater at the Armory, Armory Café

Free and open to the public. No ticket required.

Every Saturday evening throughout our Main Stage runs, the Armory Café hosts live music by local performers. Cabaret singer, actor and comedienne **Emily Sahler** will be among the performers featured during *LIZZIE*.

Prologues and Q&As:

Prologues are free, pre-performance introductions to most Main Stage plays offered on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings during the regular run of each production. Led by PCS staff members in the Main Stage auditorium. 6:55 - 7:10 p.m.

Q&As are informal conversations with the cast and PCS staff about the production, following every Thursday noon matinee performance during the regular run of each production.

➤ **Next Page: Ticket and Performance Information**

LIZZIE | Ticket and Performance Information

When: May 24* – June 29, 2014

Preview Performances: May 24, 25, 27, 28, 29 at 7:30 p.m.

***Opening Night: Friday, May 30, 7:30 p.m.**

Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sundays*; 2 p.m. matinees on select Saturdays and Sundays; matinees at noon on select Thursdays.

*Excluding June 8, 22 and 24.

Complete schedule: <http://www.pcs.org/lizzie/>

Where: On the Main Stage at the [Gerding Theater at the Armory](#)

128 NW Eleventh Ave., Portland, OR, 97209

Regular tickets range from \$38-72. Preview tickets start at \$34. Rush tickets are \$20.

Discounts for students, those under 25 and groups. Prices 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.–curtain on performance days

12–6 p.m. on non-performance days

Groups: Discounts for groups of 10 or more.

Group tickets can purchased at 503.445.3794.

Please Note: *LIZZIE contains mature content, strong language and sexuality. Most productions at PCS are recommended for high school age and up; children under 6 are not permitted.*

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#pcs_LIZZIE

Additional support for *LIZZIE* is provided by production sponsor CTA Labs. Portland Center Stage's 2013-2014 season is funded in part by Season Superstars Tim and Mary Boyle and Lead Corporate Champion Umpqua Bank; Season Sponsors the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Regional Arts and Culture Council and Work for Art; and Season Supporting Sponsor KINK fm. Portland Center Stage's official hotel partner is the Mark Spencer Hotel. Portland Center Stage is a participant in the Audience (R)Evolution Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group, the national organization for the professional not-for-profit American theater.

[Portland Center Stage](#) inspires our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways. Established in 1988 as a branch of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, PCS became an independent theater in 1994 and has been under the leadership of Artistic Director Chris Coleman since May 2000. The company presents a blend of classic, contemporary and original productions in a conscious effort to appeal to the eclectic palate of theatergoers in Portland. PCS also offers a variety of education and outreach programs for curious minds from six to 106, including discussions, classes, workshops and partnerships with organizations throughout the Portland metro area.

[The Gerding Theater at the Armory](#) houses the 590-seat Main Stage and the 190-seat black box Ellyn Bye Studio. It was the first building on the National Register of Historic Places, and the first performing arts venue, to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum certification. The Gerding Theater at the Armory opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2006. The capital campaign to fund the renovation of this hub for community artistic activity continues.

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