

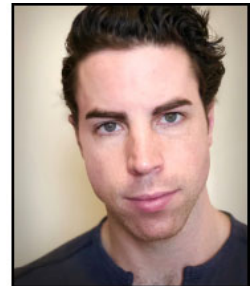


Knockout Cast Announced for Rocky: The Musical

Friday, February 1, 2019

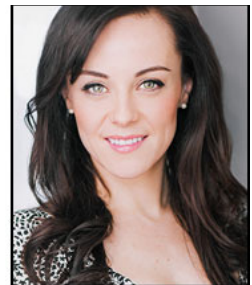
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Drayton Entertainment is pleased to announce casting for *Rocky: The Musical*. This adrenaline-fueled musical based on Sylvester Stallone’s Academy® Award-winning film will launch the 2019 Season at the Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge. The production will run for four weeks from **March 6 to March 31**.

Up-and-coming Canadian performer **Alex Kelly** has some big gloves to fill as he takes on the coveted role of small-time boxer Rocky Balboa. After an exhaustive search, Kelly proved he had the voice, athleticism and underdog spirit to step into the ring and bring this beloved character to life. The P.E.I. native graduated from Sheridan College’s prestigious Musical Theatre Performance program in 2015, and has since appeared in a number of musicals across Canada, including *Jersey Boys* at Stage West Calgary, *Beauty and the Beast* at The Globe Theatre Regina, along with several productions at Edmonton’s Citadel Theatre, and *West Side Story* for Drayton Entertainment.



ALEX KELLY

“Rocky Balboa is one of the most iconic characters in film history. In addition to searching for a young actor who had the vocal and physical stamina for the role, we knew we needed someone who could embody Rocky’s grit, vulnerability and passion – we are happy to have found that in Alex Kelly,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment, who will direct the production.



JAYME ARMSTRONG

Versatile actress **Jayme Armstrong** will play Rocky’s love interest Adrian, the shy little sister of his best friend Paulie. Armstrong has appeared in a number of Drayton Entertainment productions including *Rock of Ages*, *Legally Blonde*, *The 39 Steps* and *Chicago*, among others.

Christopher James will make his Drayton Entertainment debut as Apollo Creed, the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. James has appeared on stage as Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast*, Rooster in *Annie* and



CHRISTOPHER JAMES

Cinderella's Prince in *Into The Woods*. He is also a martial arts instructor, boxer, and certified combatant and stuntman for film and television.

Fresh from his multi-year run in the original cast of *Come From Away* on Broadway, **Lee MacDougall** will take on the role of Mickey, owner of the local gym and Rocky's eventual trainer. The veteran actor has appeared in numerous productions across Canada, including *The Foursome*, *The Odd Couple*, and *Brigadoon*, among others for Drayton Entertainment. He also directed *All Shook Up* in 2016.



LEE MACDOUGALL

Former Canadian Idol finalist and Broadway performer **Aaron Walpole** will play Paulie, Rocky's best friend and Adrian's older brother. Walpole appeared as the hilarious MC Lonnie in *Rock of Ages*, Sancho in *Man of La Mancha*, and Evilus Maximus in *Jack and the Beanstalk: The Panto*, among other productions for Drayton Entertainment.



AARON WALPOLE

The knockout cast also includes **Carla Bennett, Justin Bott, Matthew Bradley, Jeremy Carver-James, Matthew Chenuz, Vanessa Cobham, Jacquelyn French, Ryan Gifford, Dani Jazzar, Marianne McCord, Daphne Moens, Dan Payne, Andrew Scanlon, Sash Striga, and Samuel Van Dusen.**

Rocky: The Musical is based on the famous 1976 movie of the same name conceived by Sylvester Stallone, who wrote and starred in the cult classic film. The film was a sleeper hit earning over \$225 million in global box office receipts ultimately becoming the highest-grossing film of 1976. *Rocky* went on to win three Oscars including Best Picture, and Stallone became an overnight movie star. *Rocky* is now considered to be one of the greatest sports films ever made, and has spawned seven sequels: *Rocky II* (1979), *Rocky III* (1982), *Rocky IV* (1985), *Rocky V* (1990), *Rocky Balboa* (2006), *Creed* (2015) and *Creed II* (2018). Stallone portrays Rocky in all seven sequels, wrote the first five, and directed four of the six initial installments.

To ensure the musical's authenticity to the much-loved movie franchise, Sylvester Stallone worked with Broadway book writer **Thomas Meehan** (*Annie, Hairspray*) to adapt the story for the stage. The musical had its world premiere in Hamburg, Germany in the fall of 2013, and transferred to Broadway in the spring of 2014. The musical features a score by Tony Award-winning composing team **Lynn Ahrens** (lyrics) and **Stephen Flaherty** (music), writers of *Ragtime, Once on this Island, Seussical*, and many other musical theatre hits.

Drayton Entertainment is among the first professional theatre companies outside of Broadway to be granted the rights to produce the musical. This production will be directed by Artistic Director **Alex Mustakas** and choreographed by **Phil Nero** with Music Direction by **Steve Thomas**. The creative team also includes Set Designer **Brian Dudkiewicz**, Lighting Designer **Kevin Fraser**, Costume Designer **Adrienne Pink**, and Fight Director **Joe Bostick**.

Rocky: The Musical is proudly sponsored by **Equitable Life of Canada** and **Graham Mathew**. Media Sponsors are **91.5 The Beat**, **107.5 Dave Rocks** and the **Waterloo Region Record Community Partnership Program**. The Design Sponsor is **UBU Hair and Body**. The 2019 Season

Media Sponsor is **CTV**. The Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge is proudly sponsored by **John and Terry Hamilton**.

Rocky: The Musical is on stage at the **Hamilton Family Theatre Cambridge** from **March 6 to March 31**. It will transfer to the Huron Country Playhouse this summer, playing in Grand Bend from July 18 to August 3.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.draytonentertainment.com/rocky, in person at any Drayton Entertainment Box Office, or by calling **(519) 621-8000** or toll free **1-855-372-9866**.

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