



Glittering Broadway Blockbuster Opens the Season at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse

Monday, March 4, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Get your glitter on and take the ride of your life across the fabulous Australian outback with the hilarious and heartwarming Tony Award©-winning musical *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. Based on the Academy Award©-winning film of the same name, this sparkling stage adaptation launches the 2019 Season in style at the **St. Jacobs Country Playhouse** from **March 13 to April 7**.

“This is the most fun you can have at the theatre,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Drayton Entertainment Artistic Director & CEO. “*Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* is not only packed with dance floor favourites, it is a visual spectacle full of outrageous costumes, sequins and feathers, towering headpieces, dazzling dancing and more – all wrapped around a poignant story about love, acceptance and the meaning of family. Audiences are going to laugh, dance and cheer.”

Filled with glitz and glamour, this Broadway musical phenomenon follows three dynamic friends – Mitzi, Felicia, and Bernadette – as they set out on a wild adventure across the Australian outback in a battered old bus, lovingly nicknamed Priscilla. Travelling west from Sydney aboard their lavender bus to perform a drag show at a resort in Alice Springs, the trio find themselves in a comedy of errors as their road trip develops into a funny and touching journey of self-discovery.

Featuring a score of classic disco hits including “It’s Raining Men,” “I Will Survive,” “Hot Stuff,” “I Say A Little Prayer,” “Finally,” and many more, this bold blockbuster musical is a journey to the heart of fabulous.

Taking the driver’s seat for this feel-good musical is Director and Choreographer **David Connolly**. Connolly returns to the fast lane after helming several other hits for Drayton Entertainment including *Mamma Mia!*, *Hairspray*, *Jack and the Beanstalk: The Panto*, and many more. Connolly is joined by Music Director **Jeannie Wyse**, Set Designer **Stanley A. Meyer**, Costume Designer **Dariusz Korbiel**, Lighting Designer **Kevin Fraser** and Assistant Choreographer **Christine Watson**.

A stellar cast has been assembled for this rhinestone road trip including Broadway performer **Patrick R. Brown** as Bernadette Bassenger, a recently bereaved transgender woman and drag performer. Brown comes to St. Jacobs direct from the Great White Way having recently played the villain Jafar in Disney's *Aladdin*. He previously appeared as Cogsworth in Disney's *Beauty and The Beast* and Richard in *The 39 Steps*, among other roles for Drayton Entertainment.

Robbie Towns takes on the role of Tick Belrose, a drag queen performing under the pseudonym of Mitzi, who accepts an offer to perform his act in a remote casino resort. Towns recently entertained audiences as Tony in Drayton Entertainment's hit production of *Shear Madness* last fall. Other credits include *Mamma Mia!* at Edmonton's Citadel, the West End production of *Legally Blonde*, the U.K. tour of *Evita*, and many more.

Billy Lake is Adam Whitely, a flamboyant and sassy younger drag queen who performs under the name Felicia Jollygoodfellow. Audiences may remember Lake from his hilarious portrayal of stepsister Atrocia in *Cinderella: The Panto*. Lake also spent 10 seasons with the Shaw Festival performing in *Sweeney Todd*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Ragtime*, among other productions.

Tiffany Deriveau, **Kelly Holiff** and **Stacey Kay** will wow audiences with their vocal finesse as The Divas – a trio of sensational singers who narrate the story. Deriveau has appeared in numerous musicals with companies across Canada and was part of The Dynamites Trio in *Hairspray* last season. Holiff astounded audiences with her powerhouse pipes as Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha* and Ursula The Sea Witch in Disney's *The Little Mermaid* last year. Kay is a YouTube sensation and recording artist known for her big, brassy voice; she was a finalist on America's Got Talent and recently released a debut album.

Monique Lund is Marion, Tick's estranged wife and mother to their 8-year-old son Benjamin played by **Thomas Winiker**. Lund is Stratford veteran having appeared in more than 15 productions at the festival including Lilli Vanessi/Kate in *Kiss Me, Kate*, among others. Winiker appeared in the ensemble of *The Music Man* last season at the Stratford Festival.

JJ Gerber is the mischievous Tina Turner-esque drag queen Miss Understanding, with **Jesse Weafer** as the young version of Bernadette. Gerber appeared as Gilbert Blythe in *Anne of Green Gables* at the Charlottetown Festival last summer. Weafer appeared in the original Canadian companies of *Kinky Boots* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Gabrielle Jones is Shirley the owner of the Broken Hill Pub. Audiences may remember Jones as the title character in *The Drowsy Chaperone*, or as Gail in the comedy *The Birds and The Bees* last season.

Brad Rudy is Bob, a local mechanic who helps the trio get out of a jam and joins them on their journey, with **Kimberly-Ann Truong** as his wife Cynthia. Rudy has appeared in fifty-five productions over twenty-two seasons at the Stratford Festival, and previously appeared as Lieutenant Shrank in *West Side Story* for Drayton Entertainment. Truong made her Broadway debut in the revival of *Miss Saigon* and appeared in *The Music Man* and *The Rocky Horror Show* at the Stratford Festival in 2018.

George Absi, **Sam DiGiuseppe**, **Anthony MacPherson**, **Gray Monczka**, **Gregory Pember**, **Reece Rowat**, and **Conor Scully** round out the marvellous cast.

With a book by **Stephan Elliott** and **Allan Scott** based on the 1994 movie, the stage adaptation of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* debuted in Sydney, Australia in 2006. The show moved to London's West End in 2009, and had a pre-Broadway tryout at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto in 2010. The production eventually premiered on Broadway in 2011 winning the Tony Award© for Best Costume Design.

Priscilla, Queen of the Desert is proudly sponsored by **Anytime Fitness**. The Media Sponsors are **Wave FM 94.7** in Hamilton and the **Waterloo Region Record Community Partnerships Program**. Design Sponsors are **Picard's** and **KPMG**. The Orchestra Sponsor is **ARCA Financial Group**. The 2019 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

Regular performance tickets are \$48 for adults, \$29 for youth under 20 years of age. Tickets for select Discount Dates and groups of 20 or more are \$39. HST is applicable to all ticket prices.

Priscilla, Queen of the Desert runs **March 13** to **April 7**. Tickets may be purchased in person at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, online at www.draytonentertainment.com/priscilla or by calling the Box Office at **(519) 747-7788** or toll free at **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**.

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