



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CIRCLE THEATRE CONTINUES 66TH MAIN STAGE SEASON
WITH A FUN HOME**

Michigan Community Premier of the 2015 Tony Award Winner for Best Musical

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., July 9, 2018 - Circle Theatre, Grand Rapids' go-to destination for exceptional theatrical arts in an intimate setting, will continue their 66th Main Stage season with a production of *Fun Home* starting on Thursday, July 12 at 7:30 p.m. inside the Performing Arts Center on the campus of Aquinas College.

Under the direction of Jolene Frankey, *Fun Home* tells the story of Alison Bechdel. When her father dies unexpectedly, lesbian graphic novelist Alison dives deep into her past to tell the story of the volatile, brilliant, one-of-a-kind man whose temperament and secrets defined her family and her life. Moving between past and present, Alison relives her unique childhood, her growing understanding of her own sexuality, and the looming, unanswerable questions about her father's hidden desires. A refreshingly honest, wholly original musical about seeing your parents through grown-up eyes.

"'Fun Home' is important because it's real. This story is based on the struggles, desires, loves, and tragedies of life as we know it," shares cast member Caitlin Cusack who plays Alison's mother Helen. "The way this story plays with memories and the burning desire to dissect the past to understand how it affects one's present and future is something that everyone can relate to, however different our personal narratives may be."

Cast members include: Eirann Betka (Alison), Kobe Brown (Roy), Caitlin Cusack (Helen), Madeline Jones (Medium Alison), Ethan Mathias (John), Jason Morrison (Bruce), Drake Selleck (Christian), Katie Tamayo (Joan) and Evangeline Vander Ark (Small Alison).

"*Fun Home* has a universal message of love, acceptance and the dangers of not being true to oneself and the pain it causes not only that person, but the people that love them." said Jason Morrison, who plays Bruce Bechdel in *Fun Home*.

Circle Theatre audience members can take advantage of the Lobby Bar on select nights throughout the summer, including the July 13 performance of *Fun Home*. Michigan craft

beer and wine are available starting at 7:00 p.m.; beverages can be enjoyed inside the theatre on those evenings.

Audience members attending the July 27 performance of *Fun Home* can stick around after the show for a community conversation discussing *Fun Home* author Alison Bechdel's contributions to art and society as well as dialogue on *Fun Home*'s central themes: family and LGBTQ issues. This talkback will dive deep into these topics with both a Q&A and panel discussion with leaders in our community.

The production team and cast include a number of individuals that identify as a part of the LGBTQ+ community, which includes natural leader within the cast, Eirann Betka, who portrays Alison as an adult in the show. The Grand Rapids comedian and performer is no stranger to the stage, though this marks Betka's Circle Theatre debut, and her first time in a musical.

"This is an important story to tell, because though every coming out story is unique, we all share the process. A queer or trans person doesn't just come out once. You don't just announce it and assume the entire world got the message. LGBTQ+ individuals come out for the rest of their lives. Sometimes to a loved one, sometimes a teacher, classroom, or institution. Many times throughout careers, and hobbies. They come out to strangers when they hold hands with their loved ones in public. They come out to doctors and when they donate blood. Sometimes people come out proudly, and sometimes they are forced to come out when they don't want to. And every time someone is about to come out for the first time or again, there is a moment of panic just before, because you don't know if someone will respond with understanding or fear," said Betka. "I believe stories and conversations are the antidote to this. The more stories that are told and heard, the more the fear dissipates on both sides, making way for path of understanding."

2018 celebrates Circle's 66th year of producing plays and musicals for West Michigan audiences. Other upcoming Main Stage productions this season include the 2018 Audience Choice Play *Leading Ladies* and the Grand Rapids Community Premier of classic musical *On The Town*. Circle's unique and diverse Summer Concert Series performances include *Bringing Sexy Back: Male Pop/Rock Icons*, *Silver Screen: Academy Award-Winning Songs*, *Broadway Babes: Dames of the Stage* and *We'll Take You There: Classic R&B*. Past Main Stage performances this season include the children's 2018 Magic Circle production of *Snow White*, *The Queen's Fair Daughter*, the Aaron Sorkin classic play *A Few Good Men*, and musical *Into The Woods*. All performances will be held at Circle Theatre's home, the Performing Arts Center on the campus of Aquinas College.

Other shows for *Fun Home* will run July 13 & 14, 18-21, 25-28 at 7:30 p.m. and July 22 at 5 p.m. For more information or to purchase tickets, please call the box office at **616-456-6656** or visit Circle's website www.circletheatre.org

About Circle Theatre

For 66 years and counting, Circle Theatre has enriched, entertained and educated the community through exceptional theatrical arts in an intimate setting. Located in the Performing Arts Center on the campus of Aquinas College, Circle Theatre presents innovative and entertaining theatre while fostering an enthusiastic and hard working corp of individuals who serve as staff, volunteers and board members. Through the Main Stage season, unique Summer Concert Series and Magic Circle family productions, Circle Theatre engages close to 30,000 people each season. Circle Theatre also values and creates effective collaborations with various community organizations in and around Grand Rapids. More at www.circletheatre.org

#

CONTACT

Kyle Way
Marketing and Outreach, Circle Theatre
Kyle@circletheatre.org
616 632 1983