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**Contact:** SFPR – 215-627-0801  
**Sharla Feldscher**, ext. 101, [sharla@sf-pr.com](mailto:sharla@sf-pr.com), Cell 215-285-4868  
**Hope Horwitz**, ext. 102, [hope@sf-pr.com](mailto:hope@sf-pr.com), Cell 215-760-2884  
**Michael Traupman**, Marketing Director, Bucks County Playhouse  
267-740-2090 x 109, [Michael@bcptheater.org](mailto:Michael@bcptheater.org)

**JUSTIN GUARINI, MICHELE RAGUSA AND EUAN MORTON  
JOIN CAST OF “CAKE OFF”**



Justin Guarini



Michele Ragusa



Euan Morton

***New Musical Features Score By Rising Star Adam Gwon,  
Book by Sheri Wilner and Julie Jordan, and Lyrics by Gwon and Jordan  
Previews Begin August 19  
Opening Night Scheduled for August 20***

New Hope, PA (July 26, 2016) — Broadway, television and film star Justin Guarini returns to Bucks County Playhouse when he joins Tony-nominee Euan Morton, Barrymore winner Michele Ragusa and newcomer Aidan J. Lawrence at Bucks County Playhouse for “Cake Off,” a new musical by Sheri Wilner, Julia Jordan and Adam Gwon. “Cake Off”, directed by Gaye Taylor Upchurch, will preview on August 19, with opening night August 20 and run through September 10, 2016.

Bucks County Playhouse’s producing team includes Executive Producer Robyn Goodman, Producing Director Alexander Fraser, and Producers Stephen Kocis and Josh Fiedler. “We are thrilled to have Justin Guarini back onstage at the Playhouse and feel lucky to add Michele, Euan, and Aidan to the BCP family,” says Producer, Josh Fiedler. “It is also exciting to fully produce a new production by Adam Gwon, Julia Jordan and Sheri Wilner after their involvement in our Oscar Hammerstein Festival earlier this year.”

Based on the original play "Bake Off" by Sheri Wilner, "Cake Off" features a book by Sheri Wilner and Julia Jordan and lyrics by Adam Gwon and Julia Jordan. Gwon has written the musical's score. "Cake Off" received its world premiere last year at Signature Theatre in New York.

Perfect for summer theater-goers, New York Times theater critic Charles Isherwood said, "Mr. Gwon's rippling, melodic music matches the show's fluffy style." The play follows the action at the 50th Annual Millberry Cake Off, where the stakes are higher than usual, as the prize for the best sugary delight has been raised to \$1 million. For the first time, men are also allowed to enter and Paul, a starry-eyed, single Dad has risen to the top. He meets his match in Bake Off veteran, Rita, and soon they are thrust into the heat of competition. Forced to deal with the craziness, backroom politics and sugar high of America's most famous baking championship, these two feisty contestants don their aprons, strap on their oven mitts and square off. A brand new musical, "Cake Off" is a tuneful, tasty good time!

Euan Morton will play single Dad, Paul. Morton was nominated for an Olivier Award and a Tony Award, and won a Theatre World Award win for Outstanding Broadway Debut as Boy George in the musical "Taboo." He also appeared on Broadway in "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Sondheim on Sondheim" and is currently appearing in New York in Radio City Music Hall's "New York Spectacular." He has Off-Broadway and regional credits and received a Helen Hayes Award for his portrayal of Leo Frank in "Parade" at the Ford's Theatre.

Michele Ragusa, who will play Rita, has appeared on Broadway in "Young Frankenstein," "Urinetown," "A Class Act," "Ragtime," "Titanic" and "Cyrano." For her role as Corinna in "Adrift In Macao" Off-Broadway at Primary Stages and at Philadelphia Theater Company, she received Lortel and Drama League nominations, as well as a Barrymore Award. She also appeared in the "Titanic-Anniversary Concert" at Lincoln Center and in "Craving For Travel" at Playwrights Horizons and along with numerous regional theater appearances, has headlined with symphonies across the country.

Justin Guarini will be playing multiple roles in "Cake Off." Guarini, the breakout star of "American Idol" and several Broadway musicals and plays, returns to Bucks County Playhouse where he received wide acclaim for his role as Bobby in "Company" last season. After creating a sensation as the first runner up (to Kelly Clarkson) in the very first season of "American Idol," Guarini's career has taken him from music to TV and film, as well as the stage: his numerous Broadway appearances include "Wicked," "Romeo and Juliet," "Green Day's American Idiot," and "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown."

Aidan J. Lawrence, who will play Paul's young son Wyatt, was recently seen as Jem in The Queens Theater production of Harper Lee's "To Kill A Mockingbird." He has appeared in regional productions of "Pinocchio," "Seussical," "Les Miserables" and "Lost in Yonkers."

"Cake Off" will feature choreography by Josh Prince and music direction by Andrea Grody. Lauren Helpert is scenic designer. Sarah Holden is costume designer. Gina Scherr serves as lighting designer.

"Cake Off" continues an extraordinary summer season at the Playhouse, which has featured two record-breaking productions and a high-profile cast reunion. The Marsha Mason-helmed "Steel Magnolias" became the Playhouse's highest grossing show, while "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story," under the creative partnership of Hunter Foster and Lorin Latarro, broke the record as Bucks County Playhouse's top grossing musical. Currently, Charles Busch and members of the

original cast of his play, "The Divine Sister," recently opened at the Playhouse for an engagement that runs through August 13.

Tickets to Bucks County Playhouse productions can be purchased by calling (215) 862-2121 or online at [BucksCountyPlayhouse.org](http://BucksCountyPlayhouse.org).

### **ABOUT BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE**

**Bucks County Playhouse**, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, is the oldest and largest professional Equity performing arts center in Bucks County. Under the direction of Tony Award-winning producers, Alexander Fraser and Robyn Goodman, the Playhouse provides first class professional theatrical entertainment as well as community events, partnerships and arts education programming for visitors and residents of New Hope, Doylestown, Lambertville and the Delaware Valley.

Located between Philadelphia and New York, **Bucks County Playhouse** opened in 1939 in a converted 1790 gristmill after a group of community activists, led by Broadway orchestrator Don Walker and playwright Moss Hart, rallied to save the building. The Playhouse quickly became one of the country's most famous regional theaters, featuring a roster of American theatrical royalty including Helen Hayes, Kitty Carlisle, George S. Kaufman, Grace Kelly, Robert Redford, Bert Lahr, Walter Matthau, Angela Lansbury, Bernadette Peters, Alan Alda, Tyne Daly, Liza Minnelli and Audra McDonald and remained in continuous operation until December 2010. In 2012, the Playhouse re-opened thanks to the efforts of the Bridge Street Foundation, the nonprofit family foundation of Kevin and Sherri Daugherty, and Broadway producer Jed Bernstein.

Since its renovation, significant productions include Terrence McNally's "Mothers and Sons" starring Tyne Daly, which moved to Broadway and was nominated for two Tony Awards, and "Misery" by William Goldman based on the Stephen King novel which also went on to a Broadway run in the 2015-16 season. Two of the Playhouse's recent productions -- "Company" starring Justin Guarini, and William Finn's "The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" -- were named by The Wall Street Journal to its "Best of Theatre" list for 2015.

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