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**CHRONICLES**

# Buddy Holly Story Wows Bucks County and Pennsylvania

by Magda Katz



From his meteoric rise to fame in 1957 through his tragic death less than two years later, Buddy Holly influenced modern music like no other performer of his generation. *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* features more than 20 of Holly's greatest hits, including "That'll Be The Day," "Peggy Sue," "Oh Boy," and many more. The show features a book by Alan Janes and music and lyrics by Buddy Holly. It opened in London's West End, where it ran for over 10 years, and premiered on Broadway in 1990.

Virtually the entire cast from the 2016 record-breaking run at Bucks County Playhouse is scheduled to return for the 2017 production. Leading the cast of Broadway, off-Broadway, and regional talent is John Dewey (*Hello Dolly!*), reprising his role as Buddy Holly. Also returning to the production (in alphabetical order): Zach Cossman (*Band Geeks: The Musical*, Regional Premiere) as Jerry Allison; Andrew Frace (*Jersey Boys*, First National Tour) as Hipockets Duncan; James David Larson (*Into the Woods*, Roundabout Theater Company) as Joe B. Mauldin; Kent M. Lewis (*Mamma Mia*, Las Vegas) as Norman Petty; Brandi Massey (*The Color Purple*, Broadway) as Apollo Performer; Elizabeth Nestlerode (*The Meanest Birthday Girl*, Off-Broadway) as Vi Petty; Karack Osborn (*She Stoops to Conquer*, Stratford Festival) as 'The Big Bopper'; Gilbert Sanchez (*Showgirls the Musical*, Off-Broadway) as Ritchie Valens; Max Sangerman (*The Lightning Thief*, First National Tour) as Tommy Allsupp. They will be joined by Natalie Ortega, as the sole newcomer to the cast. She appears as Buddy's wife, Maria Elena.

The production is helmed by director Hunter Foster (*Company*, Bucks County Playhouse), and choreographer Lorin Latarro (*Waitress*, Broadway), both of whom are also Bucks County Playhouse Artistic Associates. Paul Masse serves as musical director, Adam Koch is scenic designer with lighting design by Gina Scherr, costume design by Nicole V. Moody, and sound design by Matthew Given.

"The audience response to our production in 2016 was so overwhelming that we decided to break precedent and bring the production back this year," says Kocis. "Our collaboration with The Kimmel Center, also a first for us, should give confidence to audience members that our commitment to high quality productions and top-notch casts is unparalleled. *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* features some of the greatest songs of a generation played by one of the most talented casts."

"This is an exciting project for the Kimmel Center as we continue to expand our role as producers in Philadelphia," says Anne Ewers, President and CEO of the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. "This five-star cast and record-breaking production will be a brilliant addition to summer on the Kimmel Center Campus and we are thrilled to be partnering with our friends at Bucks County Playhouse."

*Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*: Bucks County Playhouse, New Hope, PA May 27–June 17, 2017

Kimmel Center's Perelman Theater: Philadelphia, PA< June 24 – July 9, 2017

Tickets for the Bucks County Playhouse presentation may be purchased by calling 215-862-2121 or online at [www.bcptheater.org](http://www.bcptheater.org) or at the Bucks County Playhouse Box Office. Group sales are available for groups of 10 or more.

Tickets for the Kimmel Center presentation may be purchased by calling 215-893-1999, online at [kimmelcenter.org](http://kimmelcenter.org), or at the Kimmel Center Box Office.