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Entertainment — The Arts

## 'Buddy' travels down I-95, sets up at the Perelman



JOAN MARCUS

(Left to right:) Zach Cossman, Gilbert D. Sanchez, James David Larson, John Dewey, Maximilian Sangerman, and Karack Osborn in the Bucks County Playhouse production of "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story."

By John Timpane

*Buddy* has made the trip down I-95 and now is in his new home.

The musical, that is, *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*. After a record-breaking run at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, it closed Saturday, June 17, and right afterward, they broke it down and stashed it into trucks for the trip. (They had to make room immediately for the playhouse's next show, *The Nerd*.)

The cast for *Buddy*, which stays the same for the Kimmel show, can take a car. Meantime, the whole physical shebang — sound, lighting, stage set, costumes — unloaded at the Kimmel Center on Monday and Tuesday, and is all set to kick off its run [at the Perelman Theater on Saturday through July 9](#).

I asked Matthew Given, director of production and facilities at Bucks County, what was on his mind ahead of the breakdown and move. "In a sense, it's choreographed," he says, "figuring out every scenic

item, every costume piece, everything that needs to travel from here to Kimmel, when it leaves, when it arrives, can it sit in the truck for a couple of days?, and which stuff goes in first.” (I might add that, when he talks about these things, Given is not so much worried as totally into it, delighting in the frou-frou and the challenges. He is a logistics guy and no mistake.)

Here is a time-lapse video of the breakdown at Bucks County Playhouse (see above link)

At the Kimmel, unloading started with the extensive lighting arrangements for Buddy. The second day concentrated on stage scenery, costumes, and sound equipment. Here is the Kimmel’s time-lapse video of the process at their end (see above link)

Givens says that creating a stage design that could work for these two very different theaters was the main challenge at the Bucks County end. “The Perelman stage is much taller and wider than what we have here,” he says. “The set is very much the same. There are no significant changes there, but figuring out how it best sits on the Perelman stage took a good bit of back and forth, how the set looks on the stage, how the lighting interacts with the space.”

And there was a significant issue on the other end. “The biggest challenge from Kimmel’s perspective,” Given says, “is that they needed to rent a full-stage turntable for the show.” Wait – isn’t there a rather famous turntable there already? “Yes, there is a turntable there,” he says, “but it’s massive, 70 feet, but it’s not something they could use for this production. So we’re sitting a turntable on top of a turntable.”

That is crazy, isn’t it? “I live for all the details and logistics,” Matthew Given says. “It’s crazy and fun to do, that’s for sure.”

*Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story*. June 24-July 9 at the Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center, 300 S. Broad St. Tickets: \$20-\$84. Information: [kimmelcenter.org](http://kimmelcenter.org)