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THE MORNING CALL

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‘Rock and Roll Man’ at Bucks

By Jodi Duckett

Tony nominee Alan Campbell plays Alan Freed and Emmy nominee George Wendt plays J. Edgar Hoover in the world premiere of “Rock and Roll Man: The Alan Freed Story,” a premiere at Bucks County Playhouse through Oct. 1.

Written by Gary Kupper and Larry Marshak with Rose Caiola, with music and lyrics by Kupper, “Rock and Roll Man” tells the true story of Alan Freed — the Father of Rock and Roll.

It’s the 1950s and a cocky young DJ discovers the music that all America wants to hear — except no radio station will play it. Through guts, grit and ingenuity, Freed perseveres and unearths music for a new generation.

The musical features classic tunes by legends like Little Richard, Frankie Lymon and Screaming Jay Hawkins, including “Sh-Boom,” “Good Golly Miss Molly,” “Ain’t that a Shame,” “Rock and Roll is Here to Stay,” “Great Balls of Fire” and “Peggy Sue.”

This is the third world premiere production scheduled for Bucks County Playhouse this year. The summer season launched in May with the debut of “Clue: On Stage.” The Playhouse’s traditional subscription season also includes “The New World,” a world premiere musical comedy by the producers and co-creators of “Altar Boyz.”

Campbell has appeared on Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theater. He made his Broadway debut in the New York premiere of Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical “Sunset Boulevard” starring opposite [Glenn Close](#) and Alice Ripley, and received a Best Actor in a Musical Tony Award nomination for his performance as Joe Gillis. He also starred in Susan Stroman’s 2000 Tony-winning musical “Contact” and was seen on Broadway as Sam Carmichael in the hit musical “Mamma Mia!”

Wendt is known widely as Norm on the long-running sitcom “Cheers!” He has appeared on Broadway in “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” “Art” (also in London), “Elf” and “Hairspray.”

“Rock and Roll Man,” through Oct. 1, Bucks County Playhouse, 70 S. Main St., New Hope. Tickets: \$40-\$75. Info: buckscountyplyhouse.org, 215-862-2121.