

<http://t2conline.com/alan-campbell-and-george-wendt-lead-cast-in-rock-and-roll-man-the-alan-freed-story/>

## Times Square **CHRONICLES**

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### Alan Campbell and George Wendt Lead Cast in Rock and Roll Man: The Alan Freed Story



By: Magda Katz

On Saturday, September 16th, Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, Pa presented the world premiere of *Rock and Roll Man: The Alan Freed Story*. The show stars Tony-nominee Alan Campbell (the original star of *Sunset Blvd*) as Alan Freed and multiple nominee George Wendt (“Cheers”) playing J. Edgar Hoover. The musical includes a book by Gary Kupper, Larry Marshak and Rose Caiola. The show is cleverly directed by Tony Award Nominee Randal Myler and the fast moving choreography is by Brian Reeder. Music supervision and arrangements are by Dave Keyes and Gary Kupper. Dave Keyes is also the production’s Musical Director. *Rock and Roll Man: The Alan Freed Story* is being produced at the Playhouse in association with Caiola Productions



*Alan Campbell Photo Joan Marcus*



*Melissa van der Schyff, Alan Campbell and Heather*

This high octane musical drama has the audience singing and by the end jumping to their feet to the infectious sounds of the 60s. The cast is outstanding with a show stopping performance by Richard Crandle as Little Richard. With some tweaking of the script *Rock and Roll Man: The Alan Freed Story*, could have a successful future.

Allan Freed is commonly referred to as the “father of rock ‘n’ roll” due to his promotion of the style of music, and his introduction of the phrase “rock and roll”, in reference to the musical genre, on mainstream radio in the early 1950s. He helped bridge the gap of segregation among young teenage Americans, presenting music by African-American artists (rather than cover versions by white artists) on his radio program, and arranging live concerts attended by racially mixed audiences. Freed appeared in several motion pictures as himself. In the 1956 film *Rock, Rock, Rock*, Freed tells the audience that “rock and roll is a river of music which has absorbed many streams: rhythm and blues, jazz, ragtime, cowboy songs, country songs, folk songs.”



*Lance Freed and George Wendt talking at the after party*



*Alan Campbell*



*George Wendt*



*Lance Freed and Sieglinde Freed*

Freed's career ended when it was shown that he had accepted payola (payments from record companies to play specific records), a practice that was highly controversial at the time. There was also a conflict of interest, that he had taken songwriting co-credits (most notably on Chuck Berry's "Maybellene"), which entitled him to receive part of a song's royalties for helping increase the sales by heavily promoting the record on his own program. In another example, Harvey Fuqua of The Moonglows insisted Freed's name was not merely a credit on the song "Sincerely" and that he did actually co-write it (which would still be a conflict of interest for Freed to promote).

Freed lost his radio show on WABC, and was later fired from the station altogether on November 21, 1959. He also was fired from his television show (which for a time continued with a different host). In 1960, payola was made illegal. In 1962, Freed pleaded guilty to two charges of commercial bribery, for which he received a fine and a suspended sentence..

In attendance opening night were two of Freed's children Lance Freed and Sieglinde Freed. Lance Freed is an award-winning music publisher. Lance recalled meeting Thom Bell at Philadelphia International Records and heard a new song "How Will I Know" and Lance immediately connected it to Whitney Houston, where it became a #1 hit. Lance was the son of Alan and his first wife, Betty Lou. He was 17 when his dad died. He spent the last two years of Alan's life living with him and his third wife, Inga, in Palm Springs. Siegfried was Alan's daughter by his second marriage to Jackie.

The talented cast of the show also includes: Bob Ari, William Louis Bailey, Whitney Bashor, Richard Crandle, John Dewey, Brian Mathis, Matthew Sean Morgan, Heather Parcels, Soara-Joyce-Ross, Melissa van der Schyff, Michael Siktberg and James Scheider. Each performer brought their unique talents to their characters.

It is worth a trip to beautiful New Hope, Pa. to catch this entertaining show. The show runs through October 1, 2017.



*Alan Campbell Photo Joan Marcus*



*George Wendt and AJ Davis, Dr. Eric B. Turner, Jerome Jackson, Early Clover Photo Joan Marcus*



*Richard Crandle Photo Joan Marcus*



*Soara-Joyce-Ross and AJ Davis, Dr. Eric B. Turner, Jerome Jackson, Early Clover Photo Joan Marcus*