



Toe-tapping Musical Tribute Kicks Off 2023 Season at the Drayton Festival Theatre

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Before The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, a bespectacled kid from Texas changed music forever. Witness the meteoric rise of rock n' roll pioneer Buddy Holly in the toe-tapping, award-winning musical *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story* at the **Drayton Festival Theatre** from **May 24 to June 10**.

The life and career of Charles Hardin Holley (a.k.a. Buddy Holly) are celebrated in this musical biography that chronicles his triumphs and tragedies, from humble beginnings singing country music in small-town Texas to his rise up the popular music charts and into the hearts of music fans around the world.

This thrilling tribute explodes into full-throttled joy through renditions of Buddy Holly's greatest hits – classics like "Peggy Sue," "That'll Be The Day," "Not Fade Away," "Rave On," and many more. The music lives on, as this musical celebration will have you bopping in the aisles and singing your way out of the theatre.

"Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story has become a classic in musical theatre and it is known as one of the most successful rock 'n roll musicals in the world," says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director & CEO of Drayton Entertainment. "This production is a brilliant tribute to a true artistic pioneer. Entire runs of the show have completely sold out in the past and we're convinced our audiences will be absolutely delighted to experience the magic at the Drayton Festival Theatre."

Director **Adam Furfaro** leads this hand-clapping musical. He has directed several successful Drayton Entertainment productions including *The Wizard of Oz* and *Twelve Angry Men*, and has served as the Artistic Director of the St. Lawrence Stage Company. Furfaro is joined by Choreographer **Gino Berti**, who has choreographed numerous Drayton Entertainment productions, including *Twist & Shout: The British Invasion*, *Legends of Rock and Roll*, and *Hairspray*, and is an Associate Choreographer for Disney Cruise Lines. **John R. Banister** is the Music Director. Hailing from London, UK, Banister has played with some of Britain's top orchestras and has appeared as an actor in several shows in London's West End including *The Sound of Music*

and *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story*. In addition, he has supervised, directed, and appeared in productions of *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story* across Europe and North America.

Furfaro, Berti, and Banister are joined by Set Designer **Sean Mulcahy**, Costume Designer **Jessica Pembleton**, Lighting Designer **Jeff JohnstonCollins**, Stage Manager **Charles Russell**, Assistant Stage Manager **Stephanie Bignell**, and Apprentice Stage Manager **Lyrie Murad**.

Tyler Check dons the unmistakable horn-rimmed glasses as Buddy Holly, the leader of The Crickets and a legendary figure in rock 'n roll history. Check appeared as Carl Perkins in Drayton Entertainment's *Million Dollar Quartet*, Doug Alward in *Marathon of Hope*, and in *Kings and Queens of Country*. Elsewhere, he has appeared as Sky in *Mamma Mia!* for Stage West, and Nick Massy in *Jersey Boys* at the Thousand Islands Playhouse.

Terry Barna is the energetic hometown radio DJ Hipockets Duncan. No stranger to the Drayton stage, Barna has appeared in *Buying the Farm*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *The Birds & The Bees*, *The Odd Couple*, and *Shear Madness*, among others. Terry has performed in – or directed – over sixty stage productions throughout Ontario. On screen, he appeared on two seasons of CityTV's *Meet the Family*, for which he received a Canadian Comedy Award nomination

J. Sean Elliott tackles two roles: the successful record producer/musician Norman Petty, and music publisher Murray Deutsh. Elliott has been performing in Drayton Entertainment productions for 30 years, most recently appearing in *Twelve Angry Men* and *Million Dollar Quartet*. Elsewhere, J. Sean has appeared on stages across the country from the Charlottetown Festival to Stage West in Calgary.

Nick Sheculski is the exuberant rock 'n roll star The Big Bopper. Sheculski appeared in Drayton Entertainment's 2019 hit *Grease*, was Eddie/Dr. Scott in Canadiana Productions' *The Rocky Horror Show*, and appeared in *We Will Rock You* at Fallsview Casino.

Al Braatz is Joe Mauldin, bassist for The Crickets, and **Alex Panneton** is Jerry Allison, The Crickets' resourceful and creative drummer. Braatz has performed across Canada and appeared in several Drayton Entertainment productions including *Sorry, I'm Canadian 2* and *Disney's The Little Mermaid*. Panneton appeared in Drayton Entertainment's *Sorry, I'm Canadian 2*, in the Mayfield and Globe Theatre productions of *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story*, and in many productions with YES Theatre.

Nico Solarte is the young and promising musician Ritchie Valens, America's first Hispanic rock star. Solarte has performed around the world, appearing as Willie Lopez in *Ghost: The Musical* with Starvox Entertainment, Bobby Dupree in the Australian premiere of *Memphis The Musical*, and in a production of *Parade* at Lincoln Center in New York City. This is his Drayton Entertainment debut.

Mariah Campos is the Puerto Rican-born receptionist Maria Elena Holly, who immediately falls in love with Holly and agrees to marry him five hours after their introduction. Campos appeared in Drayton Entertainment's *Jack and the Beanstalk: The Panto*, in the Stratford Festival's production of *The Music Man*, Stage West's *Rock of Ages*, and several shows with Ross Petty Productions.

Dominique LeBlanc is Vi Petty, the wife of Norman Petty and vocalist for The Norman Petty Trio. LeBlanc last appeared at Drayton Entertainment and the title character in the 2012 production of *Annie* at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse, King's Wharf Theatre, and Huron Country Playhouse. Originally from Nova Scotia, LeBlanc has appeared in *Shrek*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *The Argyle Street Kitchen Party* at Neptune Theatre.

Isaac Bell is the guitarist and band member Tommy Allsup. **Michael Clarke** is an Apollo Singer and Jack Daw. **Darcy Stewart** is Mary Lou Sokoloff, and **Emry Tupper** is the Clear Lake MC.

The production also features 16 local youth performers who appear in the show on a rotating schedule throughout the run alongside the professional company. The Youth Ensemble performers include:

- Layla Jones, Maia Montanaro, Charleigh Perry, Georgia Perry, and Scarlett Perry of Cambridge
- Lucy Thomas of Conestogo
- Lily King of Goderich
- Lucas Coutts, Ilsa Hagerman, and Abbie Richardson of Kitchener
- Ava Voll of Listowel
- Evan Doerr of London
- Madison Bakermann, Alex Caldarelli, and Aurora Thiessen of Waterloo
- Aelish Lewis of Guelph

Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story has played to more than 25 million people in over 17 countries and has won numerous awards, including a Drama Desk Award, Laurence Olivier Award, a Tony, and several Dora Awards. The show spawned a whole genre of jukebox musical including *Mamma Mia!*, *Jersey Boys*, and *We Will Rock You*, just to name a few.

The production is proudly sponsored by **Edge Mutual Insurance**. Media Sponsors are **CKNX AM 920**, **107.1 The One**, **Cool 94.5**, **Waterloo Region Record**, **Country 104.9**, and **Grand 101.1**. The Design Sponsor is **Conway Furniture**. The 2023 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story is on stage at the **Drayton Festival Theatre** from **May 24 to June 10**.

Regular performance tickets are \$55 for adults, \$34 for youth under 20 years of age. Tickets for select Discount Dates and groups of 20 or more are \$45, and small groups of 10-19 are \$50. HST is applicable to all ticket prices. Tickets may be purchased by calling the Box Office at **519-638-5555** or toll free at **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**, or online at www.draytonentertainment.com.

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