



Fabulous Feel-Good Musical Will Raise You Up at Huron Country Playhouse

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – "Step into a dream where glamour is extreme" with the international smash-hit musical *Kinky Boots*! Winner of six Tony® Awards, London's Olivier Award, and a Grammy® Award, this huge-hearted, high-heeled hit features a sensational score by pop icon Cyndi Lauper, and will be on stage for three weeks only at the **Huron Country Playhouse** from **July 12 to July 29**.

"*Kinky Boots* is undoubtedly a worldwide phenomenon," says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. "It's energetic, fun, and packed with great music that will appeal to all types of theatregoers. Originally scheduled for the 2020 season, we're excited to finally bring this show to Grand Bend."

Based on a true story, this uplifting mega-musical follows Charlie Price, who is struggling to save the men's shoe factory inherited from his father in Northampton, England. When all seems lost, a chance encounter with the dazzling drag queen Lola spurs an outrageous idea catering to an underserved niche market by creating "women's boots for women who are men." With a little compassion and a lot of understanding, this mismatched pair eventually embrace their differences and outfit themselves for success by creating a sparkling line of sturdy stilettos unlike any the world has ever seen.

Director and Choreographer **David Connolly** is at the helm of this blockbuster Broadway musical. Connolly has directed past hit productions at Huron Country Playhouse including *Disney's Newsies*, *Mamma Mia!*, the pantos *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Cinderella*, and this season's production of *Wizard of Oz: The Panto*. Connolly is joined by Music Director **Darryn de Souza**, Set Designer **Brian Dudkiewicz**, Costume Designer **Ivan Brozic**, Lighting Designer **Kaileigh Kryzstofiak**, Stage Manager **Dustyn Wales**, Assistant Stage Managers **Frances Bundy** and **Tali Anzel-Sivkin**, and Assistant Director **Troy Defour**.

An exceptional cast has been assembled for this dazzling musical. **Jos N. Banks** steps into the role of vibrant drag queen Lola, who helps Charlie save the factory while battling his own demons.

Banks, a native of Chicago, has performed the role of Lola in the North American and Asian Tours of *Kinky Boots*. He has also appeared in the National Tours of *HAIR* and *The Color Purple* and in *Choir Boy* at Steppenwolf Theater.

Sayer Roberts is Charlie Price, a young man who is trying to save the nearly bankrupt men's shoe factory left to him by his late father. Roberts appeared in the role of Johnny B. in Drayton Entertainment's 2016 production of *Red Rock Diner*, starred as Brad in the Stratford Festival production of *The Rocky Horror Show*, and performed in the role of Marius in *Les Misérables* at both the Vancouver Arts Club and Chemainus Theatre Festival.

AJ Bridel is Lauren, a strong-minded employee of Price & Son's shoe factory who finds herself falling for Charlie while helping him save the factory. Bridel appeared in the role of Sophie in last year's production of *Mamma Mia!*, Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, and Peter Pan in *Peter Pan: The Panto*. She has performed the role of Anne in *Anne of Green Gables* at the Charlottetown Festival, appeared in Ross Petty's *Lil' Red Robin Hood*, and in the role of Lauren in Mirvish's production of *Kinky Boots*.

Alyssa Curto is Charlie's status-conscious fiancée, Nicola. Curto appeared in this season's production of *The Prom*, and was a featured soloist in *Back Home for the Holidays*. Elsewhere, she has performed at Stage West and Victoria Playhouse Petrolia.

Patrick R. Brown takes on the role of George, the factory's reserved manager. Brown appeared as Bernadette in *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, and Cogsworth in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, among other roles for Drayton Entertainment. He has performed in seven seasons with the Shaw Festival, and appeared in the role of Scar in Disney's *The Lion King* and Jafar in Disney's *Aladdin* for the Broadway, Singapore, and National Tour productions.

Paul Jerry Schwartz is Don, the close-minded factory foreman who struggles to accept Lola and the new direction that the factory is taking. A graduate of the Vocal Performance Program at the Eastman School of Music, and Acting at the Lee Strasberg Institute in New York City, Schwartz recently appeared in the Drayton Entertainment production of *Good Ol' Country Gospel*, and played Maxwell Andrews in Victoria Playhouse Petrolia's *The Andrews Brothers*.

Joining Schwartz and Brown on the factory floor are **Jackie Mustakas** as Trish, one of Charlie's employees who fears the financial strain of the factory's looming bankruptcy, and **Blythe Wilson** as Pat, the overbearing office manager.

Mustakas recently appeared as Angie Dickinson in this season's production of *The Prom*, and has performed in many Drayton Entertainment productions, including *Mamma Mia!*, *Jack and the Beanstalk: The Panto*, *Hairspray*, *The Rainmaker*, and *Death of a Salesman*. Wilson recently appeared as Dee Dee Allen in *The Prom* and as Donna in last season's production of *Mamma Mia!*. She has appeared in many seasons at Stratford and as Mrs. Banks in Disney's *Mary Poppins* on Broadway.

Sandy Winsby is Mr. Price, Charlie's father. Winsby is no stranger to the Drayton Entertainment stage, having appeared in Disney's *Newsies*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and more.

He has appeared in four seasons with the Stratford Festival, in the Broadway/U.S. National Tour of *Ragtime*, and in the original Canadian Companies of *CATS*, *Les Miserables*, and *Kinky Boots*.

Justin Stadnyk is Harry, a confident, successful discount shoe salesman. Stadnyk appeared in Drayton Entertainment's productions of *Hairspray* and *Camelot*. He has performed at the Shaw Festival, the Charlottetown Festival, and in Mirvish's productions of *Kinky Boots* and *Boys in the Photograph*.

Andrew Scanlon is Richard Bailey, Nicola's attractive boss. Scanlon is a veteran of the Drayton Entertainment stage, and most recently appeared as the self-absorbed but lovable Barry Glickman in *The Prom*, and has appeared in *Man of La Mancha*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Les Miserables*. Scanlon was part of the First US National Tour of *Kinky Boots*.

Cassel Miles is Simon Sr., Lola's unforgiving and formidable father. This season, Miles appeared as Lt. John Stokes in *American Son* and Principal Mr. Hawkins in *The Prom*. Elsewhere, he has performed with Mirvish, Canadian Stage, the Shaw Festival, and in the US Tour of *Fosse*.

George Absi, Wesley J. Barnes, Devin Chin-Cheong, Billy Lake, Noah Tremblay, and Trayvon Ward are The Angels, Lola's fellow drag queens, and backup dancers at The Blue Angel Nightclub. **Michael Cox, Keely Hutton, Stacey Kay, and Stephanie Pitsiladis** round out the glamorous cast as the ensemble.

Kinky Boots features songs by award-winning artist **Cyndi Lauper**, with a book by Tony Award® winner **Harvey Fierstein** (*La Cage Aux Folles, Casa Valentina, A Catered Affair*). Based on the 2005 Miramax film, *Kinky Boots* premiered at the Bank of America Theatre in Chicago in 2012, then made its Broadway debut at the Al Hirschfeld Theatre in 2013. Since its premiere, the show has achieved tremendous success, becoming one of the highest-grossing Broadway productions of all time. It has garnered six Tony® Awards, including Best Musical and Best Score for Lauper, along with three Laurence Olivier Awards, including Best New Musical.

Kinky Boots is proudly sponsored by **Commercial Print Management Inc.** and **Lavis Contracting Co. Ltd.** The Design Sponsor is **D. Culbert Ltd.** The Media Sponsors are **Fresh 103.1, FM 96, and The London Free Press.** The 2023 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV.**

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 **519-238-6000** or toll free at **1-855-drayton (372-9866)**, or online at <http://www.huroncountryplayhouse.com>.

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