



## *Get Ready to ROCK at the Huron Country Playhouse*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Brush up on your air guitar skills, dig out the acid wash jeans and get ready to do some serious headbanging in Grand Bend! The ultimate 80s arena-rock love story spectacular, *Rock of Ages*, explodes on stage at the **Huron Country Playhouse** in Grand Bend for 4 weeks only from **August 9 to September 3**.

“*Rock of Ages* is a goofy tribute to the ‘80s hard rock scene – it’s packed with incredible classic rock tunes, fun characters and some hilarious, adult comedy that epitomizes the hard-living lifestyle of the time,” says **Alex Mustakas**, Artistic Director of Drayton Entertainment. “This is definitely an opportunity to leave the kids at home and rock out to the music of your youth.”

It's 1987, and aspiring rocker Drew Boley meets and falls madly in love with Sherrie Christian, a fresh-faced Midwesterner who has recently moved to the Sunset Strip to chase her movie star dreams. But the rock ‘n’ roll fairy tale is about to end when industrial developers convince Hollywood’s mayor that it is time to clean up the area’s wild reputation. Suddenly, the iconic Bourbon Room club where the love birds work is in danger of being demolished and transformed into just another capitalist mall plaza!

Featuring 28 classic rock tunes like "Don't Stop Believin'," "We Built This City," "The Final Countdown," "Here I Go Again," "Harden My Heart," "Can't Fight this Feeling," and more, *Rock of Ages* is a full throttle, hold on to your shoulder pads, musical love letter to the glam rock era.

**Mustakas** himself leads the creative team of this cranked-up crowd-pleaser as Director. He is joined by choreographer **Lisa Stevens**, Music Director **Konrad Pluta**, Set Designer **Samantha Burson**, Costume Designer **Adrienne Pink**, Lighting Designer **Jeff JohnstonCollins**, Stage Manager **Paul Pembleton**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Stephanie Bignell**.

A rock solid cast has been assembled to bring this production to Grand Bend. Vancouver’s **Kale Penny** will appear as Drew Boley, the city boy with a heart of gold who dreams of being a rock god. Penny appeared as Jack Kelly in Drayton Entertainment’s production of Disney’s *Newsies*, and in *Sleeping Beauty: The Panto* and *Man of La Mancha*. Elsewhere, he appeared in the role of Carl Perkins in *Million Dollar Quartet* for the Arts Club Theatre Company and The Citadel, and is a recording artist with a debut album called *The Tracks*.

**Ashley En-fu Matthews** takes on the role of small-town girl Sherrie Christian, an aspiring actress who sees the strip as her chance for stardom. Matthews appeared in this season's production of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* at the Huron Country Playhouse, and performed in the Off-Broadway and Las Vegas Company productions of *Rock of Ages*.

**Aaron Walpole** is Lonny Barnett, co-owner of The Bourbon Room – a role he played to great acclaim in the Toronto production in 2010. A former Canadian Idol semi-finalist, Walpole has built a very successful stage career appearing in *Les Misérables* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* on Broadway and on the national tour of *Kinky Boots*, among other shows. He has appeared in *Rocky: The Musical*, *Man of La Mancha*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, and *West Side Story* for Drayton Entertainment.

**Teddy Moynihan** is the cocky mega-star Stacey Jaxx, who belts out hits like "Wanted Dead or Alive", "Paradise City", and "Rock You Like a Hurricane". Moynihan most recently appeared as the Scarecrow in this season's production of *Wizard of Oz: The Panto* and Drayton Entertainment's 2022 production of *It Runs In The Family*. Moynihan has also appeared in the Grand Theatre and Charlottetown Festival productions of *Mamma Mia!*

**Mark Harapiak** takes on the role of Dennis Dupree, Lonny's business partner. Harapiak is no stranger to the Drayton Entertainment stage, having appeared in *The Sound of Music*, *Camelot*, *Footloose*, *Mamma Mia!*, the 2017 production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and this season's production of *The Prom* at the St. Jacobs Country Playhouse. He has appeared in several seasons at the Stratford and Shaw Festivals, and performed in the North American Tour of *Mary Poppins*.

**Jeremy Carver-James** is the Hollywood Mayor, whose decision to choose money over music puts The Bourbon Room in danger. Carver-James appeared in Drayton Entertainment's *Ghost: The Musical*, *Hairspray*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and *Red Rock Diner*. He has performed in several seasons at the Shaw Festival, in *Shrek: The Musical* at the Globe Theatre, and with the Canadian and Australian companies of *Come From Away*.

**Terry Burrell** is Justice Charlier, the owner of the nearby Venus Club who befriends Sherrie. Burrell has appeared in many Broadway productions, including *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Swinging on a Star*, and *Into the Woods*, and *Dreamgirls*. This is her Drayton Entertainment debut.

Veteran actor **Lee MacDougall** is industrial developer Hertz Kleinman, with **Tyler Pearse** as his son Franz. MacDougall has appeared in many Drayton Entertainment productions, including *The Sound of Music*, *Twelve Angry Men*, and *The Odd Couple*. He originated the role of Nick in the Broadway production of *Come From Away*, and has performed at the Stratford Festival, Shaw Festival, and in several Mirvish productions. Pearse appeared in Drayton Entertainment's *Jack and the Beanstalk: The Panto*, and in Mirvish's production of *Jukebox Hero*, The Globe Theatre's *Mamma Mia!*, and in Soulpepper's *A Christmas Carol*.

**Lauren Bowler** takes on the roles of Regina Kuntz, a city planner, and Constance, an inquisitive reporter. Bowler appeared in Drayton Entertainment's 2018 production of *Out of Order*, and in multiple productions with the Arts Club Theatre Company. She appeared in *Matilda* at the Citadel Theatre and the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, and in *The Drowsy Chaperone* at the Vancouver Playhouse, Citadel Theatre, and National Arts Centre.

**Nico Solarte** is Ja'Keith, a record producer who pushes Drew to join a boy band. Solarte made his Drayton Entertainment debut as Ritchie Valens in this season's production of *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story*. Elsewhere, he has appeared as Willie Lopez in *Ghost: The Musical* with Starvox Entertainment, Bobby Dupree in the Australian premiere of *Memphis: The Musical*, and in *Parade* at the Lincoln Center in New York City.

**Dani Jazzar** is rocker Joey Primo. Jazzar has appeared in many Drayton Entertainment productions, including *West Side Story*, *Monty Python's Spamalot*, *Legally Blonde: The Musical* and *Man of La Mancha*. He has performed in several seasons with Ross Petty Productions, and in Starvox Entertainment's *Bend It Like Beckham*.

**Vanessa Cobham, Jasmine Huang, and Christine Watson** round out this wicked cast as the ensemble.

Written by **Chris D'Arienzo**, with arrangements by **Ethan Popp**, *Rock of Ages* is one of the most successful jukebox musicals of all time, playing for over seven years on the Great White Way and holding the record as the 27<sup>th</sup> longest running show in Broadway history. It premiered in Los Angeles in 2006, debuted off-Broadway in 2008 to critical acclaim and quickly moved to Broadway in 2009 garnering five Tony Award nominations. A feature film starring Julianne Hough, Russell Brand, Paul Giamatti, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Alec Baldwin and Tom Cruise was produced by Warner Bros. in 2012.

*Rock of Ages* is proudly sponsored by **Cowbell Brewing Co.** The Design Sponsor is **Darlene Rourke Photography**. The Media Sponsors are **Business London, 107.7 2Day FM, Classic Rock 98.1 FM, and MYFM 90.5 Exeter Today**. The 2023 Season Media Sponsor is **CTV**.

*Rock of Ages* is on stage at the **Huron Country Playhouse** from **August 9 to September 3**. 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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