

Chronicle Theater Preview



Cape Playhouse Launches 2024 Season

by Jennifer Sexton-Riley

Get ready for an unforgettable 2024 season on the historic Cape Playhouse stage as acclaimed producer, director and playwright Eric Rosen creates an inaugural season which is sure to be remembered.

The five-show lineup glows with music, comedy, mystery, fantastic storytelling and casts which will delight, thrill and amaze during this, the theater's 98th summer season. It all begins on opening night, June 5, as "tick... tick...BOOM!" explodes into the Cape Playhouse spotlight.

Before "Rent," there was "tick...tick...BOOM!" Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning composer Jonathan Larson created this semi-autobiographical, joyful rock-musical first, exploring fear of mortality and the power of music, creativity and expression to transform the world. On the eve of his 30th birthday, Jon, a promising young composer in New York, has lots of accolades but no income. His girlfriend wants to get married and move to Cape Cod, and his best friend has abandoned the Bohemian life for a corporate salary on Madison Avenue. How will Jon decide which path to take, when all he really wants to do is make something that will live forever before his own time runs out? Tragically, Larson did not live to experience the phenomenal success of "Rent." "Tick... tick...BOOM!" — the only other surviving example of his work — is a must-see look into an artist's drive to create something lasting and meaningful before it's too late.

Cape Playhouse's new Artistic Director Eric Rosen directs his acclaimed production — hailed as a powerful and bold new interpretation of this show — as his Cape Playhouse debut, with vocal arrangements and orchestrations by Stephen Oremus, choreography by Paul McGill and with David Auburn, script consultant. Rosen directed "tick...tick...BOOM!" last year at Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, Pa. to an enthusiastic reception. He brings the skilled and talented cast to the Cape Playhouse stage, including Broadway stars Andy Mientus, Krystina Alabado and Larry Owens.



Cape Playhouse Artistic Director Eric Rosen. COURTESY PHOTO

"It was a joy to make, and while doing it I received the first call about the position at Cape Playhouse," Rosen said. "Larson references Cape Cod a number of times in the show, including memories of growing up on a beach in Hyannis. The Larson family owned a home in Hyannis Port, and his sister Julie told me that she and Jonathan saw their first play at Cape Playhouse when he was three years old. It was 'The Wizard of Oz.' It had a huge impact on them. It inspired them to stage their own version for their parents on the beach behind their house. When I was putting the season together I knew this would be a great way to start. I fell in love with Larson's show because it speaks to the hunger and passion I felt at the beginning of my career."

"Tick...tick...BOOM!" will take the Cape Playhouse stage from June 5 to 15.

Next up, from June 18 to July 6, last year's Guest Artistic Director Hunter Foster returns to direct the Tony Award-nominated musical "Million Dollar Quartet," with book by Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux, inspired by Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins. On Dec. 4, 1956, an impromptu jam session between four current and future legends of American music at Sun Studios in Memphis, Tenn. happened by pure chance. A million dollars doesn't seem nearly enough to describe that

much iconic talent in one room. "Million Dollar Quartet," features an incredible score of rock 'n' roll, gospel, R&B and country hits, including "Blue Suede Shoes," "Fever," "Walk the Line," "Sixteen Tons," "Who Do You Love?" "Great Balls of Fire," "Folsom Prison Blues," "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," "Hound Dog," and more.

"This beloved musical chronicles that fateful night at Sun Studios, and it's a show familiar to Cape audiences, because Hunter Foster directed it on the Cape Playhouse stage in June 2018," Rosen said. "Hunter Foster has been such an incredible asset to Cape Playhouse as director, actor and guest artistic director last year. I asked him to bring the show back for my first season, and he graciously agreed. This show serves to assure everyone this summer that although there are new things on the horizon, the feeling and tradition of the Cape Playhouse will continue. Hunter Foster is probably the most emblematic artist of what Cape Playhouse has been for the last 100 years or so, and I'm so glad to bring this favorite show back."

From July 10 to Aug. 3, the Tony Award- and Grammy Award-winning musical "Beautiful, The Carole King Musical" comes to the Cape Playhouse stage, directed and choreographed by Joyce Chittick and David Ruttura, with book by Douglas McGrath, words and music by Gerry Goffin, Carole King, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil.

Before she was hit-maker Carole King, she was Carole Klein, a spunky, young songwriter from Brooklyn with a unique voice. "Beautiful" tells the inspiring true story of King's journey from teenage songwriter to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Rosen said the show features King's music within the story of a woman's journey from being an artist who creates anonymously for other people to becoming an iconic and beloved singer-songwriter and musician in her own right.

"It's hard to get lighting in a bottle twice," Rosen said. "Last summer's enormous success with 'Jersey Boys,' the first show I saw at Cape Playhouse, was incredible. I felt the energy throughout the audience celebrating that era of music, in that jukebox musical format, and it was a learning experience. Within that category of musical, I love 'Beautiful' the most. It's my hope that it brings the same joy and musical vitality that 'Jersey Boys' had. 'Beautiful' will be running four weeks longer than usual; we're taking a risk and hoping it will be popular. We have an incredible team, and although I can't announce the cast yet, there will be a ton of veterans of the show, some wonderful Broadway talent."

Next on the Cape Playhouse stage is the Tony Award-nominated "Waitress" from Aug. 7 to 24, directed by Rosen and choreographed by Paule McGill. With book by Jessie Nelson, "Waitress" features words and lyrics by Sara Bareilles, orchestrations by Bareilles and The Waitress Band. "Waitress" is based upon the 2007 motion picture written by Adrienne Shelly. Rosen said the addition of "Waitress" to the 2024 season was an unexpected opportunity.

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ROCK AROUND THE PARK

WOMR BRINGS LIVE MUSIC TO HARWICH



Sensible Shoes entertained the crowd at Harwich's Brooks Park during WOMR's Rockin' Picnic in the Park on May 11. RYAN BRAY PHOTOS



Staff at WOMR greet festival goers May 11 at Brooks Park. The community radio station is based out of Provincetown.



Red River Barbecue were among the vendors dishing out the eats at last weekend's festival.



Vendors including Sublime Visions were on hand at last weekend's concert.



Spectators braved the chillier temperatures last weekend at Brooks Park for live music, beer and food during the Rockin' Picnic in the Park.

Cape Playhouse

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"In the middle of planning the season, the rights to 'Waitress' suddenly became available," Rosen said. "I pulled another show immediately and put 'Waitress' in, because I didn't know how long it would be available. I am really excited about this."

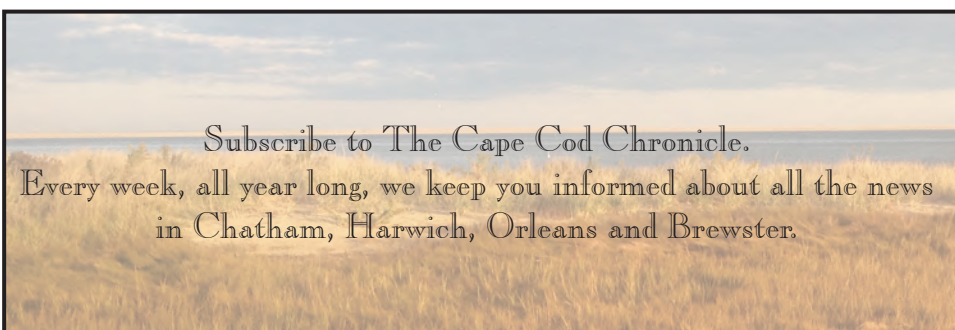
Jenna, a waitress and expert pie maker, is stuck in a small town and a loveless marriage. Faced with an unexpected pregnancy, Jenna fears she may have to abandon the dream of opening her own pie shop... until a baking contest in a nearby county and the town's handsome new doctor offer her a tempting recipe for happiness. "Waitress" is an uplifting musical celebrating friendship, motherhood and the magic of a well-made pie.

The 2024 season closes with the two-time Tony and Drama Desk Award-winning whodunit "The 39 Steps," Aug. 28 to Sept. 7, directed by Kimberly Senior. Mix a Hitchcock masterpiece with a juicy spy novel, add a dash of Monty Python and you have "The 39 Steps," a parody adapted by Patrick Barlow from the 1915

novel by John Buchan and the 1935 film by Alfred Hitchcock. The original concept and production of a four-actor version of the story was written by Simon Corble and Nobby Dimon and premiered in 1996. This perfect end-of-season treat is packed with nonstop laughs, over 150 zany characters (played by the ridiculously talented cast of four), an onstage plane crash, handcuffs, missing fingers, and some good old-fashioned romance.

Rosen said that when he was offered the artistic director position at Cape Playhouse, he reached out to Kimberly Senior immediately. "I asked her, would you come to direct? And what would you do?" Rosen said. "It's always a mystery at the end of the season. She said 'The 39 Steps.' I trust and love her so much. I said yes, let's do that. It's not exactly a satire, but a celebration of Alfred Hitchcock's style. It's thrilling, hilarious and very theatrical. It will be a great way to end the season and honor that tradition, while bringing in an artist I want audiences to know. It's going to be a fun season"

For tickets and more information visit capeplayhouse.com or call the box office at 508-385-3911.



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