

THEATRE CALGARY ANNOUNCES
CASTING FOR WORLD PREMIERE OF
MARY AND MAX – A NEW MUSICAL

Premiere to feature Lauren Elder, Anthony Galde, Nick Adams, and Susan Gilmour

(CALGARY, AB) - Theatre Calgary's artistic director **Stafford Arima** (*Allegiance*, Broadway; *Carrie*, Off-Broadway revival; *Altar Boyz*, Off-Broadway) is thrilled to officially announce the casting for the world premiere of *Mary and Max – A New Musical*, with music and lyrics by **Bobby Cronin**, book by **Crystal Skillman**, directed by Arima, choreography by **Jenn Rapp**, and orchestrations and music supervision by **Anna Ebbesen**.

Mary and Max will feature **Lauren Elder** in the role of Mary, and **Anthony Galde** as Max. Ms. Elder's Broadway credits include the revival productions of *Side Show* and *Hair*. Mr Galde is known for the original Broadway productions of *Wicked*, *The Civil War*, and *Starlight Express*. Joining them are **Susan Gilmour** (Fantine in the Canadian, Broadway, and International touring productions of *Les Misérables*) as Vera, and **Nick Adams** (original Broadway productions of *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert*, and *The Pirate Queen*) as Damian. Rounding out the cast are **Chase Crandell** (Theatre Calgary debut), **Alana Hibbert** (Theatre Calgary debut), **Kevin Aichele** (*Mary Poppins* at Theatre Calgary), **Kelsey Verzotti** (Theatre Calgary debut), **Eric Wigston** (*The Secret Garden* at Theatre Calgary), and introducing Calgarian **Katie McMillan** as Young Mary.

Based on an Australian claymation film by **Adam Elliot** about two unlikely pen pals, *Mary and Max – A New Musical* is a heartening tale that proves friendship can be found in the most unexpected of places. The musical recently received a staged reading at Pace Performing Arts (under the umbrella of Pace New Musicals), directed by Amy Rogers and musical direction by Angie Benson. It also had a reading in Atlanta through Broadway Dreams' New Works Development Project, in June 2017. Cast members Elder, Galde, Adams, and Crandell have all previously been a part of the development process of the show.

"I am thrilled to be bringing this amazingly talented group of artists together from Calgary, across Canada, and the United States," says Arima. "To be able to give *Mary and Max* a fully realized production, after five years of development, warms my heart. Bobby and Crystal have been working tirelessly on this musical, and I am thrilled beyond belief that Theatre Calgary will be the home of the World Premiere. Bringing together this deliciously, eclectic ensemble of performers, and international designers and creatives to Calgary, also adds to my joy and pride."

"When I saw the claymation film, I knew right away that I had to musicalize it. It sang to me," says Cronin. "As we developed the piece, it was clear that we were on to something very important in this frustrating time of world wide chaos, discrimination, and rebellion. *Mary and Max* is a much-needed reminder of the importance of kindness, friendship, acceptance, and the need for human connection. As Ethel Watts Mumford said, *God gave us our relatives; thank God we can choose our friends.*"

"To be working on this moving piece about connection and friendship has been life-changing for us as a team; Bobby and I are honored that *Mary and Max* has found its first home at Theatre Calgary in Stafford's first season," says Skillman. "As a dramatist dedicated to strong female protagonists, and as a team dedicated to exploring meaty issues on stage, such as Max's diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome, we are excited that this rich and magical storytelling of *Mary and Max* allows us to bring these unique characters to life on stage."

Mary and Max – A New Musical creative team also includes Sets and Costumes by **Bretta Gerecke** (*Nevermore*, Off-Broadway; *The Tempest*, Stratford Festival of Canada; *Fat Friends*, UK Tour), Lighting by **Kimberly Purtell** (*Snow Child*, Arena Stage), Projection design by **Sean Nieuwenhuis** (Broadway: *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*; *Jesus Christ Superstar* - revival), Sound design by **Peter McBoyle** (*Arrabel*, A.R.T.; *Life After*, Toronto), Stage manager is **Patti Neice**, and Assistant Stage Manager is **Emma Brager**.

Mary and Max – A New Musical will play at Theatre Calgary October 14 - November 10, 2018, in the Arts Commons Max Bell Theatre, in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Tickets go on sale to the general public on July 24th, 2018 at theatrecalgary.com.

BOBBY CRONIN

Award-winning composer/lyricist of: *Mary and Max* (Winner, Pace New Musicals; Finalist SigWorks; Finalist Germany's MUT Prize); *The Concrete Jungle* (London, cast recording); *Daybreak* (US & London); and currently writing book, music & lyrics for: #W2ML a new pop-rock musical; and *PSYKIDZ* (A Class Act NY commission); music & lyrics for *Olisnach* (book by Crystal Skillman); and the music for Christine Toy Johnson's *Till Soon, Anne*. A Yale graduate, Bobby scores/writes songs for many award-winning short films. BobbyCronin.com

CRYSTAL SKILLMAN

Crystal Skillman's plays include *Geek and Cut* (NYTimes Critics Picks), as well as *Pulp Vérité* (Clifford Odets Ensemble Play Commission, 2018 Last Frontier Theatre Conference Selection), and *Rain and Zoe Save the World* announced as the winning script for the 2018 Earth Matters On Stage (EMOS) New Play Competition. Crystal is the musical theater bookwriter of *Mary and Max*, as well as *Postcard American Town* (composer/lyricist Lynne Shankel), just selected for the 2018 Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, both with director Stafford Arima. Her work has previously been produced in Calgary at Sage Theatre with *King Kirby*, co-written with Fred Van Lente (NYT Critics Pick). Her comic book *Eat Fighter*, also written with Fred Van Lente, is coming out on Line Web Toon this fall. crystalskillman.com

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