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Dancing Our Way to a Brighter Future with “The Prom” at Near West Theatre

***Community theatre brings a story of queer love to
heart of the Gordon Square Arts District***

CLEVELAND – March 12, 2024 – Near West Theatre is thrilled to announce its upcoming production of *The Prom*, a powerful story about love, acceptance, and the reality of performative activism, that takes us from the sparkling streets of Broadway to a small town in Indiana. The musical runs three weekends from April 12 through April 28, 2024, at the theatre’s building in the heart of the Gordon Square Arts District.

The Prom tells the story of love in its purest form that begins with the central character wanting nothing more than to just dance with her girlfriend at prom. This simple desire, often taken advantage of by many, becomes the forefront of a viral social media campaign against bigotry. The campaign, driven by four Broadway stars hoping to better their image, quickly descends into chaos as the group attempts to change the minds of those hardwired for division.

“In the age of social media, a big theme is that other people’s suffering is not a PR opportunity! Changing the world takes a lot more than recording yourself shouting at those who disagree with you,” Colin Anderson, director of *The Prom*, says. “*The Prom* asks all of its characters to work toward cross-cultural understanding, encouraging conversation rather than preaching. At the same time -- and this is essential -- it leaves absolutely no room for continued oppression or harm. There is no “hate the sin, love the sinner” in this story, and that’s huge for me. When we leave enough room to learn about each other, we leave enough room to love each other in our entirety.”

Despite the show’s focus on the heavy topic of bigotry, *The Prom* is sure to leave audiences full of joy and hope for the future. “This show is hilarious and heartwarming in equal measure. The entire cast and creative team believe deeply in the message of the play, so we are leaving it all

on the field,” Anderson continues. “It's not often that we get such a well-written, joyful, life-affirming piece about queer people -- that alone is reason enough to see it. But you will also leave the theatre with eyes and hearts that are a little more open than they were before the lights came up.”

Tickets are on sale now for this production. Tickets are \$20 with Pay What You Choose options available. Tickets are available at nearwesttheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at 216-961-6391 on weekdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The theatre, constructed as part of the Gordon Square Arts District capital campaign, is at 6702 Detroit Avenue. The facility is a state-of-the-art, ADA-compliant building that is climate-controlled and fully accessible by wheelchair.

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About Near West Theatre

Near West Theatre builds loving relationships and engages diverse people in strengthening their sense of identity, passion, and purpose, individually and in community, through accessible, affordable, and transformational theatre arts experiences. Since 1978, Near West Theatre has been shaping, changing, and saving the lives of children, teens, and adults. The community theater hosts a variety of free community events and free after-school programs to underline its commitment to accessibility for all people. The organization serves people of all ages, but a focus on youth goes back to its founding and continues to this day. www.nearwesttheatre.org. @nearwesttheatre. NWT is grateful to receive financial support from the Ohio Arts Council and Cuyahoga Arts & Culture. For more information, visit nearwesttheatre.org or follow the theatre on Facebook (facebook.com/nearwesttheatre) and Instagram (@nearwesttheatre).

[TOMBSTONE INFO]

“The Prom”

"I'm who I am and I think that's worth fighting for."

Spring Mainstage Production

Runtime: 2 hours and 25 minutes, 15-minute intermission

Book & Lyrics by CHAD BEGUELIN
Book by BOB MARTIN Music by MATTHEW SKLAR
Based on an original concept by JACK VIERTEL
Original Broadway Production directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw Originally
Produced on Broadway by Bill Damaschke, Dori Berinstein, Jack Lane

James & Catherine Berges, Nelda Sue Yaw, Natasha Davison, Joe Grandy, Kimberlee Garris, Lisa Morris, Terry Schnuck, Jane Dubin, Rosalind Productions, Inc., FAHS Productions, Seth A. Goldstein, Mike Kriak, Don & Nancy Ross, Pamela Hurst-Della Pietra & Stephen Della Pietra, Cliff Hopkins, Masie Productions, Vivek Shah, Three Belles & A Bob, Arment-Tackel, Armstrong-Manocherian, Fakler-Silver, Fox Theatricals-Mosbacher-Lonow, Palitz-Stern-Smedes, Nancy & Ken Kranzberg/David Lyons, Larry & Elizabeth Lenke/Elizabeth L. Green, Iris Smith/InStone Productions, Kuhlman-Ketner/Wallace-ATxRandomProductions, The John Gore Organization and The Shubert Organization (Philip J. Smith: Chairman; Robert E. Wankel: President);
Produced in association with Independent Presenters Network, Margot Astrachan, Darren P. DeVerna & Jeremiah J. Harris and Reagan Silbe

THE PROM is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036. www.theatricalrights.com

Near West Theatre Production Cast

Hannah Armenta, Amanda Bender, Emily Brady, Maggie Chapman, Sara Chapman, Brooke Cicerchi, Christina Ciofani, Giovanni Conti, Bryce Cook, Amanda Droste, Catherine Elyse, Lauren Engle, Joel Fenstermaker, Elisa Gauntner, Blessing Gee, Alyssa Henkelman, Andrea Huynh, Robert Kowalewski, Sydney Lewis, Matt Loehrke, Shannon McPeck, Kathryn O'Sullivan, Kai Pennington, Mikaela Ray, Brendan Reynolds, Trinidad Snider, Mayela Squires, Jo Staral, Kegan Sulamoyo, McAllister Thomas, David Turner, Mack van Lier, Anthony Williams, Kellen Williams

Production Staff

Director: Colin Anderson. Asst. Director: Cali Parey. Music Director: Tom Bonezzi.
Choreographer: Kristy Cruz. Costume Designer: Vanessa Cook. Props Designer: Dred Geib.
Scenic Designer: Laura Carlson-Tarantowski. Sound Designer: Joshua Caraballo. Lighting Designer: Josee Coyle. Technical Director: Perren Hedderson. Asst. Technical Director: Emily Hehnen. Production Manager: Michael Stein. Stage Manager: Whitney Miller. Asst. Stage

Manager: Kenedy Brooks. Sound Technicians: James Romeo and Bella Brehm. Artistic Director: Trinidad Snider.

Performance Dates

Fri. April 12 - 7:30 PM

Sat. April 13 - 7:30 PM

Fri. April 19 - 7:30 PM

Sat. April 20 - 7:30 PM

Sun. April 21 - 2:00 PM

Thurs. April 25 - 7:30 PM

Fri. April 26 - 7:30 PM

Sat. April 27 - 7:30 PM

Sun. April 28 - 2:00 PM

Suggested Performance Listing

Near West Theatre, 6702 Detroit Ave., Cleveland's Gordon Square Arts District. Box Office: 216-961-6391 or nearwesttheatre.org. "The Prom" runs **April 12, 13, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27 at 7:30 p.m.**; **Feb 21 & 28 at 2:00 p.m.** General Admission: Tickets \$20 with Pay What You Choose options available. THE PROM is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by Theatrical Rights Worldwide 1180 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 640, New York, NY 10036. www.theatricalrights.com