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For Immediate Release

Salt Lake Acting Company Presents
the Utah Premiere of
Fun Home
Music by Jeanine Tesori
Book and Lyrics by Lisa Kron
Based on the graphic novel by Alison Bechdel

Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC) is honored to present Utah audiences with the Tony Award-winning musical, **FUN HOME with music by Jeanine Tesori, book and lyrics by Lisa Kron and based on the graphic novel by Alison Bechdel.** Running **April 4 – May 13**, FUN HOME tells an enthralling and complex coming of age story from the pages of Bechdel's pioneering tragicomic memoir, woven together with Tesori's beautiful, haunting score. Winner of five Tony Awards including Best Musical, FUN HOME will be right at home on SLAC's stage.

Set in three stages of a woman's life, FUN HOME tells a universal detective story about a child's search to discover what is really going on with her parents as they hold up the perfect family façade. Heart-gripping songs about sexual awakening, repressed emotions, deep secrets, yearning, resentment, love: Home.

Michael Cerveris won the 2015 Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical for his portrayal of Bruce Bechdel in the Broadway production of FUN HOME. In 2016, Cerveris visited Salt Lake Acting Company while he was in town shooting a film. At that time, FUN HOME was a pipe dream for SLAC Executive Artistic Director Cynthia Fleming and while giving Cerveris a tour of SLAC, Fleming took him to the Upstairs Theatre and said, "This is where we will produce FUN HOME someday."

Fleming reached out to Cerveris, letting him know that her FUN HOME pipe dream is becoming a reality.

Cerveris says: "I had the good fortune to be filming in Utah a bit ago, with a bit of free time to explore Salt Lake City. On a friend's suggestion, I wandered into Salt Lake Acting Company, with admittedly low expectations, and was surprised, impressed and delighted by what I saw and learned. In the midst of Salt Lake, there is an adventurous, thoughtful and progressive theater company that respects its audience, acknowledges its neighbors, yet works to embrace everyone in its community and hopes to bring stories of compassion and different points of view to its curious, passionate and informed audiences. Their work isn't always easy or comfortable, but it struck me as sincere, serious, and community centered. Their choice of Fun Home couldn't be more appropriate. As much as it is the true story of Alison Bechdel's learning to understand and embrace her own sexual identity, the true heart of the story is the complex relationship between a father and daughter that struggle to understand themselves and each other. It's a deeply moving, wonderfully funny and thought-provoking family musical for pretty much anyone who has either been a child or a parent or a sibling—in other words, for all of us. When we performed it in New York, audiences from every imaginable background and upbringing found deep connections and their own personal relationship to the story in ways no other play I know of can provide. It has no agenda other than compassion, and I

suppose, that is a radical thing to say these days. I'm delighted it's going to be presented for the first time by a local company in Utah, and even more delighted to learn that company is Salt Lake Acting Company, who I know firsthand have the heart and skill to bring it to life for the Salt Lake community."

FUN HOME has deep Utah ties, as it was workshopped and developed in the 2012 **Sundance Theatre Lab**. Two young local actors, Fynn White and Nathan Ginsberg, were part of that workshop, playing Christian and John, respectively. Both young men followed the show's progress and feel a sense of pride at having been part of its development.

White says, "I look at it now and think, 'I knew this show when it was an infant, and now it's a grown adult, and I don't really have any claim on it, but there is a sense of belonging at having been a part of that journey."

Ginsberg says, "I was nine years old when I worked on the staged reading of FUN HOME at the Sundance Institute Theatre Lab in 2012. I have grown up as the show evolved. I was lucky to see some of the original cast from the lab perform FUN HOME on Broadway after it won the Tony Award for Best Musical. FUN HOME helped me understand the importance of being myself and accepting others for who they are. I'm excited that it has come full circle, back to Utah, and that SLAC is able to share this show and its message with our community."

White has not seen FUN HOME in full production and looks forward to being able to see it here in Utah.



*Sundance Theatre Lab workshop of FUN HOME, 2012.
L to R: Nathan Ginsberg, Georgi James, Fynn White*

Throughout the run of FUN HOME, Salt Lake Acting Company is proud to partner with the **Utah Pride Center**.

Spring at SLAC means **subscription renewals**. Before and after each performance of FUN HOME, SLAC staff will be in the Chapel Theatre with information on the exciting and ambitious 18/19 season of plays. Audiences are encouraged to come early to renew their subscriptions or learn about becoming a subscriber.

WHO:

Salt Lake Acting Company

WHAT:

FUN HOME

Music by Jeanine Tesori, book and lyrics by Lisa Kron, based on the graphic novel by Alison Bechdel

WHEN:

April 4th – May 13th, 2018

Wednesdays – Saturdays @ 7:30 p.m., Sundays @ 1:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Additional performances:

Tuesday, April 24 and May 1 @ 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 28 and May 5 @ 2:00 p.m.

WHERE:

168 West 500 North

Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

MORE INFO:

Salt Lake Acting Company

168 West 500 North, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84103

Box Office: 801-363-7522

Open 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Mon – Fri

www.saltlakeactingcompany.org

Single tickets range from \$15 – \$42, depending on the performance.

Student, Senior and 30 & Under discounts are available.

Discounts are also available for groups of 10 or more.

Subscribers always pay the lowest price.

WHO'S WHO**MUSIC**

Jeanine Tesori won the Tony Award for Best Original Score with Lisa Kron for the musical Fun Home, which is currently playing on Broadway. She has also written Tony-nominated scores for Twelfth Night at Lincoln Center; Thoroughly Modern Millie (lyrics, Dick Scanlan); Caroline, or Change (lyrics, Tony Kushner); and Shrek The Musical (lyrics, David Lindsay-Abaire). The production of Caroline, or Change at the National Theatre in London received the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. Her 1997 Off-Broadway musical Violet (lyrics, Brian Crawley) opened on Broadway in 2014 and garnered four Tony nominations, including Best Musical Revival. Opera: A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck (libretto, Tony Kushner; Glimmerglass) and The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me (libretto, J. D. McClatchy, Kennedy Center). Music for plays: Mother Courage (dir. George C. Wolfe, with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline), John Guare's A Free Man of Color (Lincoln Center Theater, dir. George C. Wolfe), and Romeo and Juliet (Delacorte Gala). Film scores: Nights in Rodanthe, Every Day, and You're Not You. Ms. Tesori is a member of the Dramatists Guild and was cited by the ASCAP as the first female composer to have "two new musicals running concurrently on Broadway." She is the founding artistic director of Encores! Off-Center at New York City Center, and is a lecturer in music at Yale University. Most of all, she is the proud parent of Siena Rafter, a senior at LaGuardia High School for the Arts.

BOOK AND LYRICS

Lisa Kron is a writer and performer whose work has been widely produced in New York, regionally, and internationally. Her plays include Well, 2.5 Minute Ride, and The Ver**zon Play. She wrote the book and lyrics for the musical Fun Home (with music by composer Jeanine Tesori), winner of five 2015 Tony Awards including Best Musical. Lisa and Jeanine were the first all-woman team to ever receive a Tony for best score. As an actor Lisa was most recently seen as Mrs. Mi-Tzu and Mrs. Yang in the Foundry Theater's acclaimed production of Good Person of Szechuan (Lortel Award, Outstanding Featured Actress). Honors include a

Guggenheim fellowship, a Doris Duke Performing Artists Award, and the Cal Arts/Alpert Award. She is a proud founding member of the OBIE- and Bessie-Award-winning collaborative theater company The Five Lesbian Brothers. Lisa currently serves as Secretary of the Dramatists Guild Council and on the boards of the McDowell Colony and the Lilly Awards.

DIRECTOR

Jason Bowcutt is thrilled to be working with Salt Lake Acting Company once again. His previous directing credits include: ONE BIG UNION by Debora Threedy, MARRY CHRISTMAS by Elaine Jarvik and ADAM AND STEVE AND THE EMPTY SEA by Matthew Greene for Plan-B Theatre Company; THE OTHER PLACE and [TITLE OF SHOW] for Utah Repertory Theatre Company; REASONS TO BE PRETTY for the U of U Theatre Lab, and Lisa Krons' WELL for Pygmalion Productions. In Utah he has acted in Plan-B's BASED ON A TRUE STORY, and END OF THE HORIZON, Pioneer Theatre Company's ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST and, long ago, Salt Lake Acting Company's LA CAGE AUX FOLLES. Jason has worked for a number of Theatres across the country including: The Guthrie Theatre, McCarter Theatre, Shakespeare Theatre, Signature Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and many others. In New York he played Nathan Leopold in John Logan's NEVER THE SINNER for which he was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award as well as a Drama Desk Award for his work. Jason is one of the Co-Founding Directors of the New York Innovative Theatre Foundation (the IT Awards), a community-building organization for the Off-Off-Broadway Theatre community.

MUSICAL DIRECTOR/SOUND DESIGN/DRUMS

David Evanoff has been the musical director for dozens of SLAC shows, including SATURDAY'S VOYEUR, BAT BOY, BLOODY BLOODY ANDREW JACKSON, and GO DOG GO! David owns Sound Designs Studios now in its 25th year. He is an Emmy award winning composer and engineer. His work has been featured at Disneyland, Universal Studios, TV, Film and Special events.

CHOREOGRAPHER

Penelope Marantz Caywood is thrilled to be a part of the creative team for FUN HOME. Past directing projects at SLAC include THE TRUE STORY OF THE THREE LITTLE PIGS, DIARY OF A WORM, A SPIDER, AND A FLY, ART DOG, A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD, CAT IN THE HAT, CLICK CLACK MOO: COWS THAT TYPE, HOW I BECAME A PIRATE, and IF YOU GIVE A MOUSE A COOKIE. Penny is a freelance director and choreographer in the Salt Lake Area and the Artistic Director of University of Utah Youth Theatre. She also presents at numerous arts integration and elementary classroom teacher training workshops. Because of her unique position at the University of Utah, she also teaches university courses for pre-service education majors.

CAST

Ashley Wilkinson* (Helen Bechdel) This is Ashley's debut with SLAC. This role comes on the heels of her first local theatre project as The Singer in Sackerson's SHOCKHEADED PETER last fall. Prior to getting her feet wet here in Salt Lake, she worked on a variety of projects in Southern California, including Big Edie/Little Edie in Performance Riverside's GREY GARDENS, Golde/Constable in Riverside Rep's 8-person production of FIDDLER ON THE ROOF, and Dialect Coach for Candlelight Pavilion's MY FAIR LADY. Among her other acting credits are Bella in LOST IN YONKERS, Truvy in STEEL MAGNOLIAS, and Blanche in BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS (Neil Simon Festival). Ashley has coached dialects on numerous professional, community, and university productions, and has assistant directed for the Utah Shakespeare Festival's Playmakers program.

Ava Hoekstra (Small Alison) is a 7th grader in Park City, is honored and very excited to be making her debut on the SLAC stage! Her prior credits include THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD (Sarah Summers) at Hale Center Theatre, WILL ROGERS FOLLIES (Mary Rogers), OLIVER! (Ensemble), IT HAPPENED ONE CHRISTMAS (Ensemble), FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (Shprintze) – all at Pioneer Theatre Company, ELF Jr. (Finale Soloist) at Centerpoint Legacy Theatre, BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER (Holly Slocum) at Midway Performing Arts, and JUNIE B. JONES THE MUSICAL (Ensemble) at The Egyptian Theatre. She recently performed as a Soloist at the PARK CITY HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR at The Egyptian Theatre in Park City and also enjoyed playing (Princess Jasmine) in her school's production of ALADDIN. She has competed in several vocal competitions and in 2017 was awarded 1st Place and Best Musical Theatre piece in her age group at the Con Brio Music

Festival. Ava has received numerous years of vocal training at Utah Conservatory in Park City and is currently a member of the musical theatre performance group "Moxie" at Utah COPA in Draper. She would like to thank her family for their continued support and a big thank you to SLAC for this opportunity!

Benjamin Henderson* (Bruce Bechdel) is grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this team of artists in the Utah premiere of FUN HOME and his first production at SLAC. His most recent project was THE HEART OF ROBIN HOOD at Hale Centre Theatre. Other credits include THE TEMPEST and ROMEO AND JULIET at the Tony Award Winning Shakespeare Theatre Company, as well as A MAID'S TRAGEDY and LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST with Shakespeare Theatre Co./ACA, PETER AND THE STARCATCHER, SOUTH PACIFIC, BIG FISH, PETER PAN, THE CIVIL WAR and CRAZY FOR YOU at Hale Center Theater Orem, ANNIE GET YOUR GUN at Sundance Summer Theatre. He was awarded the Mark Twain Comedic Scholarship at the National Irene Ryan Scholarship Competition after having been a National Finalist in 2014. Benjamin is an award-winning Actor Combatant through the Society of American Fight Directors. He has also worked as a director and educator through Alpine School District, Utah COPA and others. Benjamin holds a Master of Fine Arts degree in Classical Acting from Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting at The George Washington University, and a Bachelor of Science in Theatrical Arts from Utah Valley University.

Hailee Olenberger (Medium Alison) is ecstatic to be making her Salt Lake Acting Company debut in FUN HOME! She recently moved to Utah from NYC where she studied musical theatre at AMDA. Hailee has been doing shows since she was five years old. Since moving to Utah, she has been seen onstage at the Ziegfeld Theater in Ogden as Lulu in CABARET and as Natalie in NEXT TO NORMAL; both amazing experiences that she wouldn't trade for the world!

Jack Sarfati (John Bechdel) is so excited to be joining Salt Lake Acting Company in FUN HOME! In 2015, Jack performed as Moishe in FIDDLER ON THE ROOF at Pioneer Theatre Company. He has participated in several University of Utah Youth Theater Camps as well. Jack is a 6th grader at Salt Lake Arts Academy.

Natalia Bingham (Small Alison) is so honored to join this incredible cast for her debut at Salt Lake Acting Company. Recent performance experiences include Annie in ANNIE (Ziegfeld Theater, Egyptian Theater), OLIVER! and FIDDLER ON THE ROOF (Pioneer Theater Company), Little Cosette in LES MISÉRABLES (Ziegfeld Theater), THE SOUND OF MUSIC (Centerpointe Legacy Theater), and Disneyland Performing Arts in Anaheim, CA. Natalia has also performed at the Weber County Fair and at Ogden Christmas Village. She loves her competition dance team, playing piano, and has recently taken up bass guitar. Much love and thanks to the cast and crew, Lisa, Kat, and my family for giving me the chance to follow my crazy dream!

Mary-Helen Pitman (Joan) is so excited to be making her professional debut at SLAC! She is currently a junior in the Actor Training Program at the University of Utah. Recent projects include YOU NEVER CAN TELL as Mrs. Clandon at the Babcock Theatre, as well as BLACKBERRY WINTER and HAND TO GOD at SLAC as the puppet apprentice to Glenn and Linda Brown. Thank you so much to her family, friends, professors, and SLAC for their love and support!

Matthew Rees (Christian Bechdel) is thrilled to make his debut at SLAC in FUN HOME and to be sharing the stage with his cousin Ava. An 8th grader from North Ogden, Matthew recently performed in TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD (Jem Finch) at both Hale Centre Theatre and at Centerpointe Legacy Theatre. Other credits include THE MUSIC MAN (ensemble) and IT HAPPENED ONE CHRISTMAS (ensemble) at Pioneer Theatre Company, APPROPRIATE (Ainsley Lafayette) at Good Company Theatre, THE ADDAMS FAMILY (Pugsley), SHREK (Young Shrek/Puss in Boots), PETER PAN (Lost Boy), and JOSEPH (ensemble), all at Centerpointe Legacy Theatre. He has also enjoyed playing many roles, including Tiny Tim in SCROOGE, A CHRISTMAS CAROL at the Terrace Plaza Playhouse. In his free time, Matthew is a thrill-seeker. He loves to ski, to ride roller coasters and to experience haunted attractions. He would like to thank his family who support his interest in the arts.

Oliver Kokai-Means (John Bechdel) has loved FUN HOME since he saw it on Broadway and is excited to share it with Utah audiences. Most recently he originated the role of Thomas in the new play DELUGE at

Weber State University for which he received a Meritorious Award from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. At WSU, he has also played the Boy in *SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR* and Freddy Rogers in *WILL ROGERS FOLLIES*. At DaVinci Distance Academy he played the narrator in *A PIRATE'S TALE*. Oliver is also a playwright and his play, *ZOMBIE THOUGHTS*, co-written with Jennifer A. Kokaj, will premiere this fall with Plan B Theatre.

Presley Caywood (Small Alison) is so excited to be performing at Salt Lake Acting Company for the first time. She feels as if she's grown up at the theatre since her mom has directed the children's show for the last 8 years. Presley has been in several main stage Youth Theatre productions at the University of Utah including *MISS NELSON IS MISSING*, *GREAT AMERICAN TALL TALES*, and *THUMBELINA*. When she's not practicing piano or working on math homework, she loves watching YouTube (especially slime videos), making videos on her phone, and singing her heart out.

Shawnee Kennington* (Alison) is absolutely thrilled to be making her SLAC debut in this beautiful show. She was most recently seen as Diana Goodman in *NEXT TO NORMAL* at the Ziegfeld Theatre and Winifred Banks in *MARY POPPINS* at CPT. Other favorite roles include Dr. Vivian Bearing in *W;t*, Margaret Fuller in *CHARM*, Maureen in *RENT* and Aldonza in *MAN OF LA MANCHA*. Shawnee holds a BA in Musical Theatre from Weber State University and is the recipient of 2 national acting awards through the Kennedy Center. She has been seen on stage at the Los Angeles Theatre Center and on various stages throughout Utah.

Topher Rasmussen* (Roy/Mark/Pete/Bobby Jeremy) is delighted to return to SLAC. Favorite credits include *HARBUR GATE*, *R+J: STAR CROSS'D DEATH MATCH*, *COURSE 86B IN THE CATALOGUE* (SLAC), *THE ICE FRONT*, *ADAM AND STEVE & THE EMPTY SEA*, *BORDERLANDS* (Plan-B), *DESIRE UNDER THE ELMS*, *THE PRIVATE EAR*, *THIS BIRD OF DAWNING* (Sting and Honey), *THE WORST THING I'VE EVER DONE* (Sackerson), *THE REVENGER'S TRAGEDY*, *TWELFTH NIGHT*, *ROMEO AND JULIET*, *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW* (Grassroots Shakespeare), *NEXT TO NORMAL* (UVU), and *HAMLET AND OPHELIA GO SWIMMING* (Edinburgh Fringe, SLC Fringe).

DESIGN TEAM

Set Design – Dennis Hassan
Costume Design – Nancy Hills
Lighting Design – Michael J. Horejsi
Composer/Sound Design – Jennifer Jackson
Stage Manager – Justin Ivie*
Assistant Director – Holly Fowers
Assistant Stage Manager – William Richardson*
UPTP Assistant Set Design – Stirling Brennan
UPTP Assistant Light Design – Gerald Black
UPTP Assistant Costume Design – Ally Thieme

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

ABOUT SALT LAKE ACTING COMPANY

Salt Lake Acting Company (SLAC)'s mission is to engage and enrich community through brave contemporary theatre. Founded in 1970, SLAC is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 professional theatre dedicated to producing, commissioning, and developing new works and to supporting a community of professional artists. SLAC has been nationally recognized by the Shubert Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Edgerton Foundation, among others. SLAC operates under a SPT Actors Equity Association contract and is a Constituent Member of Theatre Communications Group (a national organization for non-profit professional regional theatres), and the National New Play Network (a national alliance of non-profit professional theatres that champions the development, production, and continued life of new plays).

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