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Press Release

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Cyndi Lauper's *Kinky Boots* Comes to The Grand Theater

WAUSAU, WI – *Kinky Boots*, the smash-hit musical that brings together Grammy Award-winning rock icon Cyndi Lauper (score), and four-time Tony Award-winner Harvey Fierstein (book), is coming to The Grand Theater on May 1st and 2nd.

The winner of six 2013 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, *Kinky Boots* tells the uplifting and heartwarming tale of Charlie Price, a young man who has reluctantly inherited his father's shoe factory, which is on the verge of bankruptcy. Trying to live up to his father's legacy and save his family business, Charlie finds inspiration in the form of Lola, a fabulous entertainer in need of some sturdy stilettos. Lola turns out to be the one person who can help Charlie become the man he's meant to be. As they work to turn the factory around, this unlikely pair finds that they have more in common than they ever dreamed possible... and discovers that when you change your mind about someone, you can change your whole world.

After writing the music for *Kinky Boots*, Cyndi Lauper can now add "Tony Award-winner" to her already impressive collection of Grammy and Emmy Awards. In the following interview with John Moore of the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, she discusses the differences between writing pop songs and musical theatre, the major themes of the show, and what makes *Kinky Boots* so special.

Q: *You join rock artists like Neil Young, Duncan Sheik, Sting and the Flaming Lips who have made the crossover into Broadway, not by capitalizing on their existing songbooks but by writing original musicals for the theater. How is writing for the stage different from writing songs for yourself?*

A: *It's very different. Your job as the composer of a musical is to move the story forward with the songs. You have to write for many voices and from all the characters' perspectives. And I had a blast doing that. There were songs that I wrote that I really*

loved that didn't make the show because maybe there was a change in the book or there was a different arch for a character and the story and therefore the song had to change. For my own CDs, when I write a song that I love, it makes my records! And of course when I write for myself, I'm writing from my perspective, it's the story I am trying to tell through the songs on the album to my fans.

Q: *In this era of safe Broadway musicals that are based on an existing movie title, or the catalog of a popular band's songs, how do you think Kinky Boots broke through and rose to the top of the theatre world?*

A: *I think the answer is kind of a simple one. It's because the show has a huge heart, and people respond to that. It's a story about love and acceptance and friendship and overcoming obstacles and everyone can relate to that. Harvey Fierstein is one of Broadway's great talents and the book is so very very good. It was an honor to collaborate with Harvey and tell the story of Lola and Charlie.*

Q – *Obviously, the story spoke to you.*

CL– *It's a story about an outsider. You know, I have a kid and I have a husband. And I've watched their relationship now for fifteen years. When you're a parent, after a while, you start to see; you start to see when they imitate the father's walk. And you see the two of them walking away and you see the kid walking exactly like his dad. And then you see the year where they don't even want to talk to their dad; it's not cool. It's funny, I made "Girls Just Want to Be Fun" very famous. Now, I see the other side of the coin. When this came along, the biggest draw was that every parent goes through this and every kid goes through this, and the disappointment for a kid to feel like they failed their parents is so huge, whether you're gay or straight. And the fact that the guy's a drag queen, to me, is inconsequential – except for the fact that he's so different from this factory bloke; that they can come together, overcome their differences, outside and in, for the greater good. And it's based on a true story. It almost seems like a perfect storm, the three of us coming together at this time, doing this project and all the people who came and worked along with us on this.*

Q: *What do you want audiences throughout the country to know about what they are in for if they come to see Kinky Boots?*

A: *An amazing show with great heart that will lift you up.*

Kinky Boots is playing at The Grand Theater on Tuesday, May 1st and Wednesday, May 2nd at 7:30 PM. Tickets are available at The Grand's Ticket Office at 401 N. Fourth St., by phone at 715-842-0988, or at www.grandtheater.org.

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