

= Fun Home (musical) =

Fun Home is a musical adapted by Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori from Alison Bechdel 's 2006 graphic memoir of the same name . The story concerns Bechdel 's relationship with her gay father and her attempts to unlock the mysteries surrounding his life . It is the first Broadway musical with a lesbian protagonist .

The musical was developed at the Ojai Playwrights Conference in 2009 and at the Sundance Theatre Lab and The Public Theater 's Public Lab in 2012 . It opened Off @-@ Broadway at the Public Theater in September 2013 to positive reviews . Its run was extended several times , and it ran until January 2014 . The Public Theater production of Fun Home was nominated for nine Lucille Lortel Awards (winning three , including Outstanding Musical) , two Obie Awards and eight Drama Desk Awards , among others .

The original Broadway production began previews at the Circle in the Square Theatre on March 27 , 2015 and opened on April 19 , 2015 . It was nominated for twelve Tony Awards and won five , including Best Musical . The show 's cast album received a nomination for the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Musical Theater Album . The production is set to close on September 10 , 2016 .

= = Background and development = =

Writer / artist Alison Bechdel 's book Fun Home , a memoir in comics format , was published in 2006 to critical acclaim . Its subject is Alison Bechdel 's coming of age , with particular emphasis on her relationship to her father , Bruce Bechdel . Alison 's coming out as a lesbian is complicated by the revelation that Bruce had also had homosexual relationships , including encounters with males below the age of consent . Four months after Alison comes out to her parents , Bruce is killed by an oncoming truck ; although the evidence is equivocal , Alison concludes that he committed suicide .

Bechdel 's book was adapted into a musical with book and lyrics by Lisa Kron and music by Jeanine Tesori . Writing in Slate , June Thomas called the play " the first mainstream musical about a young lesbian " . The adaptation was developed over the course of five years . It was first workshopped at the Ojai Playwrights Conference in August 2009 . A staged reading was performed at The Public Theater in 2011 . (Of the cast of that staged reading , only Judy Kuhn and Beth Malone continued in their roles to the full Off @-@ Broadway production .) The musical had another workshop as part of the Sundance Institute 's Theater Lab in July 2012 , featuring Raul Esparza . Following that it ran for three weeks as part of the Public Theater 's Public Lab series in October and November 2012 . On April 8 , 2013 , musical selections from the play were performed by Maggie Gyllenhaal , Judy Kuhn , David Hyde Pierce and others at an event for the Sundance Institute . A final Public Theater workshop was held in May 2013 .

The musical 's development process entailed extensive changes and rewrites . Beth Malone said that the original workshop script " doesn 't resemble this current play at all " . In early versions , the production was structured around Bechdel 's drawings , but the creators later removed most of this element , save for one image of Bruce and young Alison which is used at the musical 's conclusion . Revisions continued through the preview period of the Off @-@ Broadway production , requiring the actors to perform new material every night .

= = Productions = =

Fun Home premiered Off @-@ Broadway at The Public Theater in previews on September 30 , 2013 , and opened officially on October 22 , 2013 . Originally scheduled to run through November 3 , 2013 , the run was extended several times , and the musical closed on January 12 , 2014 . The production was directed by Sam Gold , with sets and costumes by David Zinn , lighting by Ben Stanton , projections by Jim Findlay and Jeff Sugg , and choreography by Danny Mefford . In response to a controversy in which the legislature of South Carolina attempted to financially punish the College of Charleston for choosing the original graphic novel of Fun Home as a reading selection for incoming freshmen , the off @-@ Broadway cast presented a concert of songs from the

musical to a full house in Charleston , South Carolina , in April 2014 . Bechdel , Kron , Tesori and musical director Chris Fenwick accompanied the cast .

The musical began previews at Broadway 's Circle in the Square Theatre on March 27 , 2015 , with an official opening on April 19 , 2015 . Gold directed the show on Broadway , with the same production team as the Off @-@ Broadway production , including Zinn , Mefford and Stanton . The Off @-@ Broadway cast reprised their roles on Broadway , except for the actors playing Medium Alison , John and Christian Bechdel . In December 2015 , eight months after opening on Broadway , the show recouped its capitalization and began to make a profit . Costs for the show were relatively low due to a small cast and orchestra . The production is set to close on September 10 , 2016 , after 26 previews and 582 regular performances .

A year long national tour of the show is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2016 . The first international production of Fun Home is planned to premiere in Manila , Philippines , in late 2016 , with Lea Salonga as Helen .

= = Plot summary = =

As she works on her memoir in the present day , successful middle @-@ aged cartoonist Alison Bechdel recalls two time periods in her life . The first is her childhood , around age 10 (Small Alison) , when she struggles against her father Bruce 's obsessive demands and begins to identify her inchoate sexuality . The second is her first year in college (Medium Alison) , when she begins her first relationship and comes out of the closet as a lesbian .

Alison remembers herself , as a child , demanding that her father play " airplane " with her , while Bruce sorts through a box of junk and valuables he has salvaged from a barn (" It All Comes Back ") . Bruce tells the family that a visitor from the local historical society is coming to see their ornate Victorian home that he has restored , and his wife Helen prepares the house to Bruce 's demanding aesthetic standard (" Welcome to Our House on Maple Avenue ") . In a phone call with her father and a journal entry , Medium Alison expresses her anxiety about starting college (" Not Too Bad ") . At the Bechdel Funeral Home , Small Alison and her brothers John and Christian hide in caskets while Bruce talks to Pete , a mourning young man . The children perform an imaginary advertisement for the funeral home (" Come to the Fun Home ") . Medium Alison hesitates outside the door of the college 's Gay Union , and is flummoxed when she meets Joan , a confident young lesbian . Bruce invites into the house Roy , a young man whom he has hired to do yard work . Bruce begins to seduce Roy in the library while Helen is playing the piano upstairs , trying her best to ignore it (" Helen 's Etude ") .

Medium Alison writes a letter to her parents but does not mention Joan or the Gay Union . Bruce orders Small Alison to put on a dress , but she would rather wear a jean jacket . Bruce tells her that she would be the only girl without a dress and that the other children would laugh at her ; she leaves on the dress (" Party Dress ") . Medium Alison proudly tells Joan that she has written a letter to her parents telling them that she is a lesbian , but begins to second @-@ guess herself (beginning to wonder if she 's asexual) until Joan kisses her . That night , she is excited and joyful at having had sex with Joan (" Changing My Major ") .

Alison considers the connection between her coming out and her father 's death . Small Alison has a homework assignment to draw a map of places her family has lived , but Bruce aggressively takes over , drawing it the way he thinks it should look . Alison realizes that despite having traveled and lived in Europe , her father 's place of birth , life , work and death can all be placed in a small circle in Beech Creek , Pennsylvania (" Maps ") . Bruce offers a ride and a beer to an underage boy , and it is later implied that they had sexual intercourse . Medium Alison writes to her parents , asking for a response to her coming @-@ out letter . Small Alison watches The Partridge Family , but Bruce switches it off . Small Alison talks to him , and finds out that he is going to see a psychiatrist because he is " bad " and not good like her . Alison expresses annoyance that he lied to her ; the actual reason he was going was because he was arrested for what he did to the underage boy . Helen tells Small Alison that the psychiatrist will help her father , and attempts to reassure her . Bruce starts a vicious argument with Helen and breaks several of her possessions along with some

library books . Small Alison fantasizes about her family as the happy family singing together on television (" Raincoat of Love ") .

Alison remembers a time when Bruce took her and her brothers to New York City and stayed in a borrowed Greenwich Village apartment . After a long day , Small Alison , Christian and John settle into sleeping bags . Small Alison wakes up and catches Bruce sneaking out . Bruce sings a lullaby (" Pony Girl ") . He reassures his daughter that he 's just going out for a paper , but he leaves to go cruising . Medium Alison is angered by a noncommittal letter from Bruce , responding to her coming out . At a luncheonette with her father , Small Alison notices a butch delivery woman and feels an inexplicable kinship with her (" Ring of Keys ") .

Medium Alison calls home to demand a fuller response from her parents and is astonished when her mother tells her that her father has had sexual relationships with men and boys . Alison explores the tensions her family was under at this time and watches a heated argument between her parents . Medium Alison returns home for vacation with Joan in tow . Helen confesses to Medium Alison her devastation at spending her life in an unfulfilling marriage with Bruce (" Days and Days ") . Medium Alison , Joan and Bruce have an unexpectedly pleasant evening around the piano . Bruce asks Alison if she 'd like to go for a drive , and (adult) Alison realizes that Medium Alison is gone ; she joins her father in the car , breaking the boundaries of time . On the drive , she and Bruce struggle to express themselves to each other (" Telephone Wire ") .

Bruce , manically engaged in a new restoration project , tries and fails to find a way to hold his life together . He steps in front of a truck and is killed (" Edges of the World ") . Alison , newly reconciled to her past , remembers and draws a moment of perfect balance : playing " airplane " with her father , while reminiscing about the past with the other Alisons (" Flying Away ") .

= = Characters and original casts = =

The character of Alison Bechdel is portrayed by three actors . 43 @-@ year @-@ old " Alison " is the play 's narrator who reviews her family and early life , 19 @-@ year @-@ old " Medium Alison " who is an Oberlin student discovering her sexuality , and 8 @-@ year @-@ old " Small Alison " who is a child struggling against her father 's expectations .

The original casts are as follows :

In November 2013 , Alexandra Socha left the off @-@ Broadway production and was replaced in the role of Medium Alison by her understudy , Emily Skeggs . Skeggs plays Medium Alison in the Broadway production . In October 2015 , Lucas was replaced in the role of Small Alison by her understudy , Gabriella Pizzolo , who had previously shared the title role in Matilda .

Rebecca Luker played the role of Helen Bechdel from April 5 through May 22 , 2016 , while Judy Kuhn underwent hip surgery . Kuhn returned to the role on May 24 .

= = Songs and recordings = =

Since the songs in Fun Home are closely integrated into the script , no list of songs was provided in the program .

The original cast album , released in 2014 , opened at # 2 on the Billboard Top Cast Album Chart , a remarkable feat for an Off @-@ Broadway cast album . After the musical opened on Broadway in 2015 , new portions of the show were recorded , and parts were re @-@ recorded , especially to feature Emily Skeggs in the role of Medium Alison . It also includes more dialogue to help the listener follow the story . The song " Party Dress " was added , while a song for Small Alison in place of " Al for Short " , as the latter has been removed from the Broadway show . A dialogue scene , " Clueless in New York " , replaced " I need more coffee " . Bruce 's short a capella bedtime song , " Pony Girl " was added , as was the scene " A flair for the dramatic ... " . The album was released in May 2015 .

The track list of the 2015 release , which reflects the musical numbers in the Broadway production , is as follows :

1 . " It All Comes Back (Opening) " ? Small Alison , Bruce , Alison & Company

- 2 . " Sometimes my father appeared to enjoy having children ... " ? Alison , Bruce & Helen
- 3 . " Welcome to Our House on Maple Avenue " ? Helen , Alison , Small Alison , Christian , John , Bruce & Roy
- 4 . " Not Too Bad " ? Medium Alison
- 5 . " Just had a good talk with Dad ... " ? Alison , Medium Alison , Bruce , Pete , Small Alison , John & Christian
- 6 . " Come to the Fun Home " ? John , Christian & Small Alison
- 7 . " Helen ? s Etude " ? Alison , Roy , Bruce , Small Alison , Helen , John , Christian & Medium Alison
- 8 . " Thanks for the care package ... " ? Medium Alison , Joan , Small Alison & Bruce
- 9 . " Party Dress " ? Small Alison , Bruce , Medium Alison , Alison
- 10 . " Changing My Major " ? Medium Alison
- 11 . " I leapt out of the closet ... " ? Alison , Small Alison , Bruce & Helen
- 12 . " Maps " ? Alison
- 13 . " Read a book ... " ? Bruce , Small Alison , Alison & Helen
- 14 . " Raincoat of Love " ? Bobby Jeremy & Company
- 15 . " Clueless in New York ? " ? Alison , Small Alison & Bruce
- 16 . " Pony Girl " ? Bruce
- 17 . " A flair for the dramatic ? " ? Alison , Joan , Medium Alison & Bruce
- 18 . " Ring of Keys " ? Small Alison & Alison
- 19 . " Let me introduce you to my gay dad ... " ? Joan , Medium Alison , Alison , Bruce & Small Alison
- 20 . " Shortly after we were married ... " ? Helen & Medium Alison
- 21 . " Days and Days " ? Helen
- 22 . " You ready to go for that drive ? ... " ? Bruce & Alison
- 23 . " Telephone Wire " ? Alison & Bruce
- 24 . " It was great to have you home ... " ? Bruce & Alison
- 25 . " Edges of the World " ? Bruce
- 26 . " This is what I have of you ... " ? Alison
- 27 . " Flying Away (Finale) " ? Alison , Medium Alison & Small Alison

= = Critical reception = =

The Off @-@ Broadway production opened on October 22 , 2013 , to positive reviews . Ben Brantley of The New York Times spoke of the musical 's emotional impact , artistry and universality , calling it a " beautiful heartbreaker of a musical " . " Fun Home isn ' t just a coming out story or a coming @-@ of @-@ age story . Its universality comes from its awareness of how we never fully know even those closest to us , and of the undercurrent of grown @-@ up secrets , intuited by children , that exists to some degree in every family . Fun Home finds a shining clarity that lights up the night . " Brantley praised both writer Kron and composer Tesori for their work . Of Kron he says : " her book and resonantly precise lyrics give this show its essential spine " , and of Tesori 's score " her best and most varied score to date ... [which] captures [the story 's] haunting ambiguity . " Brantley later listed Fun Home as one of his top 15 shows of 2013 .

Joe Dziemianowicz of the New York Daily News called the musical " achingly beautiful " and said that it " speaks to one family and all families torn by secrets and lies " . Dziemianowicz listed Fun Home at the top of his Top 10 in Theater for 2013 list .

Charles McNulty of the Los Angeles Times , though mildly critical of a few of the show 's elements still was impressed with Fun Home , saying " There have been plenty of new American musicals better put together than Fun Home , but I can ' t think of one in recent years that has touched me as much with its tender , ironic and courageous vulnerability . " He states that the show 's seeming weaknesses are part of the reason it succeeds , saying that it " gets off to a choppy start , takes unnecessary musical detours and is staged in a rough @-@ hewn style that sometimes seems more accidental than intentional " but that it " succeeds not despite these flaws but in large measure

because of them . Bechdel 's ironically self @-@ aware and inwardly searching sensibility is honored by a musical that isn 't afraid to reveal its awkward side . "

Though less positive than Brantley , Dziemianowicz or McNulty , Miriam Krule of Slate still said " there are also moments of pure joy , and the musical shines during these " . Krule felt , however , that " it 's not clear that a musical is the best second format for the material " .

Adam Hetrick , editor @-@ in @-@ chief of Playbill.com , described Fun Home as " the best musical of the year " , calling it " an emotionally @-@ packed piece of theatre , full of joy , heart , sorrow and uncomfortable reality " . Reviewing the cast album for Playbill , Steven Suskin praised Kron 's " marvelous set " of lyrics , called Tesori " a master of musical styles ... [who] matches Kron 's tone with a mix of sensitivity and humor . " Suskin singled out " Days and Days " for especial praise , calling it " a staggering piece of musical theatre writing " . He also lauded the performances of Judy Kuhn (" stunning ") , Michael Cerveris (" one of his finest performances ever ") and the three Alisons , Beth Malone , Alexandra Socha and Sydney Lucas (calling the last " one of the most assured child actors we 've seen ") . Suskin called Fun Home " the best musical on the New York stage of 2013 ? far outclassing the competition ? and ... thus far the best musical of the 2013 @-@ 14 season . "

New York Times music critic Anthony Tommasini praised Tesori 's score as a " masterpiece " , noting that the " vibrant pastiche songs " and " varied kinds of music ... a jazzy number for the young Alison in the middle of a rescue fantasy ; Sondheim @-@ influenced songs that unfold over insistent rhythmic figures and shifting , rich harmonies " come together to create " an impressively integrated entity " . Tommasini also praised the show 's ensemble numbers , calling them " complex yet texturally transparent , engrossingly dramatic " .

Anticipating the play 's move to Broadway , David Levesley of online magazine Mic heralded Fun Home 's focus on the individual experience of a lesbian , calling it " the most daring , relentless analysis of homosexual identity on the New York stage right now " .

= = Awards and nominations = =

The Public Theater production of Fun Home was nominated for the 2014 Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History , nine Lucille Lortel Awards (winning three , including Outstanding Musical) , seven Outer Critics Circle Awards (winning Outstanding New Off @-@ Broadway Musical) , three Drama League Awards and eight Drama Desk Awards , and it won the Off Broadway Alliance Award for Best New Musical . Many critics predicted that Fun Home would win the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Drama . The musical was a finalist for the Pulitzer , but The Flick by Annie Baker won the award . The Pulitzer committee called the musical " A poignant musical adaptation of a graphic memoir " . The production won the New York Drama Critics ' Circle Award for Best Musical and the Obie Award for Musical Theater , and 10 @-@ year @-@ old Sydney Lucas won an Obie in the Performance category , becoming the youngest performer ever to win an Obie .

The original Broadway production was nominated for 12 Tony Awards , winning five , including Best Musical . Jeanine Tesori & Lisa Kron were the first female writing team to win the Tony Award for Best Original Score . Kron won for Best Book , Cerveris won for Best Leading Actor , and Gold won for Best Direction . Both Lucas and Skeggs won Theatre World Awards .

= = = Original Off @-@ Broadway production = = =

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