

Alliance Theatre

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alliance Theatre Announces World Premiere Musical, *LIKE FATHER*

The Coming-of-Age Musical by Jacob Ryan Smith and Caroline Pernick Premieres in October 2026

ATLANTA – (February 3, 2026) — Alliance Theatre today announced that it will produce the world premiere musical *LIKE FATHER* as part of its 2026/27 season. A bold new musical created by **Jacob Ryan Smith**, with book, music, and lyrics by **Smith** and **Caroline Pernick**, and direction by Alliance’s Jennings Hertz Artistic Director **Tinashe Kajese-Bolden** (*The Preacher’s Wife*), *LIKE FATHER* will run on the Hertz Stage beginning in October.

LIKE FATHER is a coming-of-age musical set against America’s true-crime obsession. After her father’s arrest, seventeen-year-old Chris moves in with her estranged mother, Michelle, and stepfather, Ben. When a hit true-crime podcast exposes their family’s disturbing past to the world, they are forced to face the truth of what brought them together, or risk being undone by its consequences.

Driven by a bold, innovative folk-pop score, *LIKE FATHER* explores legacy, identity, and the cost of obsession, inspired by the loved ones left in the wake of infamous serial killers—and by the true-crime industry’s meteoric rise to over 250 million listeners worldwide.

The show was a semi-finalist at the Eugene O’Neill New Music Theater Festival and emerged as the winner of the inaugural Open Jar Musical Shark Tank.

Creative Team for the Alliance Theatre Production includes:

- **Director:** Tinashe Kajese-Bolden (*The Preacher’s Wife*)
- **Book, Music, and Lyrics:** Jacob Ryan Smith & Caroline Pernick
- **Choreographer:** Dell Howlett
- **Music Director:** Alejandro Senior
- **Assistant Director:** Rachel Sabo-Hedges
- **Associate Music Director:** Adam Beskind
- **Dramaturg:** Amanda Watkins
- **Casting:** Kevin Metzger-Timson, CSA & Frankie Ramirez, CSA, TRC Company

Casting details and specific performance dates will be announced in the coming months. The musical’s commercial producers are Howard Alter, Zachary Hausman, and Madison Thompson. Co-producers include Caryl & Kendrick Smith, City Cowboy Productions, Fahs Productions, Happy Recap Productions, Jonathan & Rae Corr, Kerri Mandelbaum, and Steven N. Lerner.

“At its core, *LIKE FATHER* is about learning to live beyond the shadows we inherit—a journey through grief, forgiveness, and the radical act of reclaiming your own name,” said Director Tinashe Kajese-Bolden. “It’s a surprising, darkly funny, deeply human story that speaks to so many of us reckoning with the weight of our histories and the hope of transformation. New work like this needs room to take risks, and regional theaters are where those stories are given oxygen; I’m thrilled to work alongside artists and producing partners with an unflinching belief in bold, emotionally intelligent storytelling, and proud that the Alliance is a national home where artists are trusted to push boundaries, deepen our empathy, and imagine what’s possible.”

Alliance Theatre

DIGITAL ASSETS:

Digital assets including graphics and headshots are available for download here –

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/hwdiwurd972cmmhr4iwii/AGv8Dz8WE_SuR5OoLEtOZM?rlkey=9qzq_hvr8zt2yywnyu6e2w3p3w&st=xwz32seq&dl=0

TICKETS:

Tickets for *LIKE FATHER* will be available as part of a season tickets package in March 2026; individual tickets will be available in May 2026. Visit www.alliancetheatre.org/likefather for updates.

VENUE INFORMATION:

Hertz Stage at Alliance Theatre
Woodruff Arts Center, Memorial Arts Building
1280 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30309

SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION:

Support for the Hertz Stage Series is provided by Warner Bros. Discovery

BIOS:

Jacob Ryan Smith (Book, Music, Lyrics) Jacob is an award-winning writer, composer, and performer. His credits include *Mr. Sipple*, *Shelter Me*, *Painless: The Opioid Musical*, and *Grumpy Monkey*. His work has been produced at Pasadena Playhouse, the Alliance Theatre, and more. Named one of Theatrely's "Visionary Theatre Makers Poised for a Meteoric Rise (2025)," his music has been featured on Disney+, The Today Show, and NPR, garnering over a million streams on Spotify.

Caroline Pernick (Book, Music, Lyrics) is an award-winning writer, composer, and performer, known for her sharp, emotionally driven storytelling. Pernick has worked at Tony Award-winning theaters across the country including South Coast Repertory, American Conservatory Theater, and The Geffen Playhouse. A UCLA alumni, she is a past winner of the IMSTA Songwriting Award at NAMM and UCLA's Spring Sing— joining winners Sara Bareilles and Katie Boeck.

Tinashe Kajese-Bolden (Director, she/her) is a multi-award-winning director, actor, and artistic leader committed to forging pathways where artistic innovation meets equity, access, and joy. Originally from Zimbabwe, she was named the Jennings Hertz Artistic Director of the Alliance Theatre in 2023. Tinashe began her journey at the Alliance as the inaugural BOLD Women's Leadership Circle Artistic Director Fellow and later served as the BOLD Associate Artistic Director, where she stewarded the Reiser Atlanta Artists Lab new work program and the groundbreaking Spelman Leadership Fellowship—the first partnership of its kind between a regional theatre and a historically Black college to mentor and employ emerging Black women and non-binary arts leaders. Her honors include the University of Illinois Distinguished Legacy Award, a Princess Grace Award for Directing, a MAP Fund Award, and recognition as a Zelda Fichandler Award finalist. As a director, she has helmed major world premieres including *Furlough's Paradise* by a.k. payne, *Forsyth County Is Flooding* (a modern opera), *The Preacher's Wife* by Tituss Burgess and Azie Dungey (co-directed with Michael Arden), *The Many Wondrous Realities of Jasmine Star Kidd*, and *Nick's Flamingo Grill*, with a career spanning Broadway, Off-Broadway, major regional theatres, film, and television. On screen, she appears as Flo Crowley in the DC Universe, including James Gunn's *Superman* and *The Suicide Squad*, with additional credits including Marvel's *Hawkeye*, Ava DuVernay's *Cherish the Day*, *Dynasty*, and *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*,

Alliance Theatre

among others. Rooted in purpose, Tinashe's work centers on building inclusive systems that uplift communities and ensure artists are empowered to lead with dignity, imagination, and collective power.

###

About the Alliance Theatre

Founded in 1968, the Alliance Theatre is the leading producing theater in the Southeast, reaching more than 165,000 patrons annually. The Alliance is a recipient of the Regional Theatre Tony Award® for sustained excellence in programming, education, and community engagement and is led by Artistic Directors Tinashe Kajese-Bolden and Christopher Moses and Managing Director Brandon Kahn. In January 2019, the Alliance opened its new, state-of-the-art performance space, The Coca-Cola Stage at Alliance Theatre. In January 2026, the Alliance opened the new Goizueta Stage for Youth & Families on the campus of the Woodruff Arts Center to expand its programming and commitment to creating excellent productions for family and student audiences of all backgrounds. Known for its high artistic standards and national role in creating significant theatrical works, the Alliance has premiered more than 140 productions including eleven that have transferred to Broadway. The Alliance education department reaches 90,000 students annually through performances, classes, camps, and in-school initiatives designed to support teachers and enhance student learning. The Alliance Theatre values community, curiosity, collaboration, and excellence, and is dedicated to reflecting the cultural richness of Atlanta's community with the stories we tell, the artists, staff, and leadership we employ, and the audiences we serve. www.alliancetheatre.org

OUR MISSION

Expanding hearts and minds on stage and off.

OUR VISION

Making Atlanta more connected, curious, and compassionate through theatre and arts education.