

MOVIES

# Kathleen Marshall to Direct 'Sideways' as Broadway Musical

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Walter McBride/WireImage

Kathleen Marshall

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The Tony winner will also choreograph the production based on Rex Pickett's novel that inspired Alexander Payne's 2004 hit film.

Tony-winning choreographer Kathleen Marshall is set to direct and choreograph *Sideways: The Musical* on Broadway.

She joins author Rex Pickett, who wrote the novel on which Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor's Oscar-winning screenplay for the 2004 hit film adaptation was based, and composer Anthony Leigh Adams in developing the Broadway stage production.

Marshall, brother of Hollywood director Rob Marshall, has earned three Tony Awards for her choreography work on *Wonderful Town*, *The Pyjama Game* and *Anything Goes*.

Pickett formed a joint venture with EFG-Renascence Productions to develop a musical based on the film and set about to deliberately find a woman helmer and choreographer experienced on Broadway. "As grateful as I am for the movie and the various non-musical stagings, I'm eager to move away from men overemphasizing the journey of my male characters," Pickett said Monday in a statement regarding the choice of Marshall.

*Sideways: The Musical* will explore the simmering romance between Miles and Maya from the Hollywood movie, characters played by Paul Giamatti and Virginia Madsen.

Added Pickett: "I had an instinct that a woman director would focus more intently on, and highlight, the trajectory of the Miles/Maya love story and alchemize all the elements of my novel into a production with overall greater character nuance. In Kathleen we found the perfect marriage of musical theater experience and someone who instinctually understands that *Sideways* is not just a fun, bawdy, picaresque buddy-buddy romp, but an emotional journey of the heart. That's what I wrote."

Marshall in her own statement said the *Sideways* libretto offers a "fully-realized narrative of four characters with strong storylines who are three-dimensionally real and relatable, something not seen so much in musical theater today."

Released in 2004 via Fox Searchlight, *Sideways* starred Giamatti as depressed teacher Miles Raymond and Thomas Haden Church as Jack Cole, the impulsive former soap star with whom Miles takes a road trip through Santa Ynez Valley wine country.

The principal cast also included Madsen and Sandra Oh as women Miles and Jack meet and become romantically involved with on their travels. The R-rated comedy-drama was budgeted at a modest \$16 million and went on to gross \$71.5 million domestically, plus an additional \$38.2 million overseas.

*Sideways* was nominated for five Oscars, including best picture. A play adapted by Pickett from his novel has been produced at multiple theaters in the U.S. and the U.K., including at the La Jolla Playhouse, directed by Tony winner Des McAnuff.

With the music for *Sideways: The Musical* around three-quarters written and recorded, the producers are eyeing a spring/summer 2020 regional staging before moving to Broadway.