

Wednesday, September 20, 2006

Butler, Edelman, Hoty, Kudisch, Sills, White, et al. Set For NAMT Festival



Dee Hoty

By Brian Scott Lipton

Kerry Butler, Gregg Edelman, Dee Hoty, Marc Kudisch, Douglas Sills, and Lillias White will be among the performers at the 18th Annual National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals, to be held at New World Stages on October 8-9. The NAMT Festival, which is not open to the general public, is attended by producers and other theater insiders, and has been the launching ground for such shows as *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and *The Drowsy Chaperone*.

The festival consists of 45-minute staged presentations of eight musicals as well as a showcase of songs from 10 new musicals. The latter event will be hosted by Beth Leavel and Richard Kind, and it will feature performances by Kathy Brier, Liz Callaway, Eden Espinosa, Christopher Fitzgerald, Jenna Leigh Green, Colin Hanlon, Adam Jacobs, Jeremy Kushnier, and Sally Mayes.

Sills and White will star alongside Janet Metz, Leslie Kritzer, David Reiser, Kim Bromwell, Stephen DeRosa, Tiffany Haas, Jenn Harris, Adam Heller, and Steve Rosen in *Jerry Christmas*, which features a score by Andrew Lipa (*The Wild Party*) and a book by Daniel Goldfarb (*Modern Orthodox*). The show, directed by David Warren, tells the story of Jerry Barron, a Jewish movie star who tries to resuscitate his failing career by hosting a Christmas television special in his home.

Kritzer will also star with Megan Hilty and Sarah Stiles in *Vanities*, a new musical written by Jack Heifner, based on his Off-Broadway play, with music and lyrics by David Kirshenbaum (*Summer of 42*). The show focuses on three vivacious Texas teenagers as they journey from being cheerleaders to housewives over two decades. The musical had a well-received full production earlier this summer at TheatreWorks in Mountain View, California with the same three ladies.

Hoty will be among the stars of *Dangerous Beauty*, which features a book by Jeanine Dominy, music by Michele Brourman, and lyrics by Amanda McBroom (composer of such popular songs as "The Rose" and "Errol Flynn"). Based on the book *The Honest Courtesan*, the show, to be directed by Sheryl Kaller, focuses on the Renaissance courtesan and poet Veronica Franco, who was arrested for practicing witchcraft during the Spanish Inquisition.

Butler, Edelman, Kudisch, Ian Brennan, Andrew Rannels, and Merle Dandridge will star in *One Step Forward*, written by Leslie Arden, Timothy French, and Berni Stapleton, which concerns a group of men and women facing life after World War II. Elsewhere in the festival Brian D'Arcy James will appear in *Emma*, an adaptation of the Jane Austen novel with book, music, and lyrics by Paul Gordon to be directed by Kent Nicholson; Darius de Haas and Lynne Wintersteller will be among the stars of *Julian Po*, with music by Ira Antelis and book and lyrics by Andrew Barrett, about a strange man who mysteriously arrives in a strange Middle-American town; Amy Spanger,

Katie Thompson, and Kate Wetherhead will star in *Piece*, which has a score by Scott Alan and a book by Tara Smith, about a woman looking back on her life after her mother's death; and Alton Fitzgerald White and Mary Testa will appear in *Sunfish*, written by Michael L. Cooper and Hyeyoung Kim, which tells the magical story of a woman who will do anything to restore her blind father's sight. The show will be directed by Stafford Arima.

Industry professionals who are interested in attending the festival should email festival@namt.org

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