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## **Stage vets set for legit showcase NAMT's annual event set with B'way stars**

By Gordon Cox



Butler

Sills

The National Alliance for Musical Theater's annual industry showcase of new tuners has drawn a long roster of veteran legit thespians -- including Kerry Butler, Dee Hoty, Brian d'Arcy James, Marc Kudisch, Douglas Sills, Mary Testa and Lillias White -- to appear in the two-day fest.

Helping attract talent was the recent boost in industry status NAMT saw when one of its alums, "The Drowsy Chaperone," became a strong seller on Broadway last season and won five Tonys. Fest also served as a springboard for "Thoroughly Modern Millie." Two-day event, set for Oct. 8-9, presents 45 minutes each of eight developing tuners to an industry-only aud of producers, presenters and regional reps.

Sills ("The Scarlet Pimpernel"), White ("The Life"), and Jenn Harris ("Silence! The Musical") are among the ensemble of Andrew Lippa's latest, "Jerry Christmas," about a comedian trying to stage a comeback.

Hoty ("The Will Rogers Follies") appears in "Dangerous Beauty," based on the 1998 pic. D'Arcy James ("Sweet Smell of Success") stars in Paul Gordon's ("Jane Eyre") adaptation of "Emma," and Testa has a role in Korean folk tale "Sunfish."

Butler ("Hairspray"), Kudisch ("Chitty Chitty Bang Bang") and Merle Dandridge ("Tarzan") appear in "One Step Forward," about WWII vets returning home.

NAMT also will present a songwriter showcase in which thespians -- Kathy Brier ("Hairspray") and Eden Espinosa ("Wicked"), among others -- perform tunes by up-and-coming songwriting teams.