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NAMT fest takes swing at kings Theater showcase includes 'Casey at the Bat'

By Gordon Cox

Latin kings, Gypsy kings and an adaptation of "Casey at the Bat" are among the offerings of the National Alliance for Musical Theater fest, the annual industry showcase of new tuners set for October in Gotham.

Festival has helped launch Broadway vets "The Drowsy Chaperone" and "Thoroughly Modern Millie." Seven of the eight productions presented last year have gone on to further development, including Bard-based musical "The Boys Are Coming Home," bowing at Chicago's Goodman Theater in 2008, and "Vanities," which is moving toward a commercial production.

Lineup for the fest, which presents 45 minutes of each tuner to an industry-only aud of producers and presenters, includes the following:

- "The Break Up Notebook: The Lesbian Musical," composer-lyricist Lori Scarlett and book writer Patricia Cotter's story of one woman's quest for the girl of her dreams. A production is currently playing in San Diego in a staging by helmer Peter Schneider ("Sister Act").
- "Casey at the Bat," an adaptation of the Frank Deford poem by composer Gordon Goodwin and book writer-lyricist Tom Child.
- "The Chocolate Tree," about the fantasies of a girl afflicted with an illness, from composer Marshall Paillet and lyricist A.D. Peneda, who collaborate on the book.
- "The Gypsy King," a prince-and-pauper tale of look-alikes and attempted assassination. Randy Rogel writes the music and lyrics and co-scripts with Kirby Ward.
- "Kingdom," about two friends who join the Latin Kings street gang, with music by Ian Williams and book and lyrics by Aaron Jafferis.
- "The Story of My Life," composer-lyricist Neil Bartram and book writer Brian Hill's two-hander about a writer who must write a eulogy for his friend.
- "Tinyard Hill," about father-son blacksmiths in Vietnam-era Georgia. Mark Allen composes the music, while Thomas M. Newman provides the book and lyrics.
- "Writing Arthur," composer-lyricist-book writer David Austin's tuner about a man torn between two women, one of whom is fictional.

The NAMT fest will be held at Off Broadway's New World Stages Oct. 7-8.

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