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NAMT Announces Selections for New Musical Fest.

By BWW News Desk



The National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT) has announced the official selections for its 20th Annual Festival of New Musicals to be held in New York City on Monday, October 20 and Tuesday, October 21, 2008, which will include Pamela's First Musical the last work by Wendy Wasserstein and Cy Coleman, in collaboration David Zippel. Other Festival writers have won such awards as the Kleban, Richard Rodgers, and Jonathan Larson awards.

At NAMT's Festival of New Musicals, leading theatre producers from across the world come together for this industry-only event to discover eight new musicals over two days. Since 1989, the Festival has presented over 200 musicals and 300 writers, and 80% of these shows have found subsequent developmental and full productions; tours; and licensing agreements as a direct result of the Festival.

This year's 2008 Festival of New Musicals selections are:

BARNSTORMER

Book & Lyrics by Cheryl L. Davis

Music by Douglas J. Cohen

SYNOPSIS- Before Amelia Earhart, there was Bessie Coleman -- the first Black aviatrix who rose from the cotton fields of Texas and the barbershops of Chicago to finally conquer the skies of France. Her brief but dynamic life inspired the disenfranchised to pursue their dreams, including her own nephew who became a Tuskegee Airman.

BEATSVILLE

Music & Lyrics by Wendy Leigh Wilf

Book by Glenn Slater

Based on the Roger Corman film "A Bucket of Blood"

SYNOPSIS - Greenwich Village, 1959—Playground of bohemians, beatniks and jazzbos. Tragically square Walter Paisley finds that his clay figures, sculpted nudes, and papier-mâché busts bring him the acceptance he desperately yearns for. But what if the world discovered that Walter's body of work consists of actual bodies? A bebop-inflected black comedy/satire.

THE CUBAN AND THE REDHEAD

By Robert Bartley and Danny Whitman

SYNOPSIS--Escaping the bloodshed of his native Island, a young Cuban boy sets sail on a turbulent journey that leads him all the way to Hollywood and into the arms of a fiery, redheaded movie star named Lucille Ball. At the climax of *The Cuban and The Redhead*, Desi and Lucy put their money, their trust and their dreams on the line in a gamble to save one thing—their marriage. They risk it all on an untested medium called television. Can these two star crossed lovers blaze a path that defies Hollywood and history to be together? (This work was formerly known as *Dance With Me*).

THE LEGEND OF STAGECOACH MARY

By Thomas Mizer and Curtis Moore

Synopsis--Ex-slave Mary Fields turns the idea of the real Wild West hero on its head when she travels to 1880's Montana to find freedom, adventure and her long-lost best friend. Along the way, she discovers a gaggle of square-dancing nuns and a town full of cowboys in need of a little lesson in the American Dream.

ORDINARY DAYS

By Adam Gwon

SYNOPSIS--When Deb loses her most precious possession—the notes to her graduate thesis—she unwittingly starts a chain of events that turns the ordinary days of four New Yorkers into something extraordinary. Told through a series of intricately connected songs and vignettes, *Ordinary Days* is an original musical about growing up and enjoying the view.

PAMELA'S FIRST MUSICAL

Book by Wendy Wasserstein

Lyrics by David Zippel

Music by Cy Coleman

Based upon the book by Wendy Wasserstein, illustrated by Andrew Jackness

SYNOPSIS—Pamela is a young suburban girl who feels out of place. Her mother has passed away and she lives with her father and two brothers who don't understand her. Pamela's active fantasy life and infatuation with Broadway Cast CDs keeps her from being too lonely. On her 11th birthday, she learns that her father is about to re-marry. The rest of her family is thrilled which makes Pamela feel like even more of an outsider. Just when Pamela thinks her entire world is going to crash, her eccentric Aunt Louise arrives. Aunt Louise is a New York fashion designer who sweeps Pamela off to New York City and her first Broadway musical. She meets producers, writers, actors, directors and choreographers and discovers the off-stage and on-stage magic of Broadway Theater. As Aunt Louise says, "A Broadway Musical can cure anything." Pamela's trip to New York inspires her to write and direct her own musical and to "collaborate" with her blended family, which, ultimately, brings them all together.

Note: This was one of the final projects of Wendy Wasserstein and Cy Coleman.

SEE ROCK CITY & OTHER DESTINATIONS

Book & Lyrics by Adam Mathias

Music by Brad Alexander

SYNOPSIS--Fueled by a brilliant pop-rock score, *See Rock City & Other Destinations* ventures to tourist destinations across America, mapping out stories of sightseers who need to get a little lost in order to find themselves. From Coney Island to Mt. McKinley, the Alamo to Niagara Falls—get ready to take the leap!

Note: *SEE ROCK CITY & OTHER DESTINATIONS* won the 2008 Richard Rodgers Award for Musical Theatre.

THE YELLOW WOOD

Book by Michelle Elliott

Music by Danny Larsen

Lyrics by Elliott and Larsen

SYNOPSIS—17-year-old Adam is frantically trying to memorize Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" before English, but because he didn't take his Ritalin, he can't get much farther than the "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood..." before a fantastic wood begins coming to life in his school. Desperate to prove he can turn his life around, Adam struggles to get beyond his ADD, his cultural heritage and his

unique but unruly imagination. Adam is pulled deeper and deeper into the Yellow Wood, where he must face the reality of who he is and decide who he will ultimately become.

Regarding the 20th annual Festival of New Musicals, NAMT Executive Director Kathy Evans said, "Our NAMT member producing organizations, as well as the entire professional theatre industry attending the Festival, will see a lot of amazing talent. We look forward to celebrating our success stories from the past 20 years and are excited to help these amazing writers find new productions for their work."

From last year's Festival 2007, seven of the eight shows presented have found commercial options or regional productions:

THE BREAK-UP NOTEBOOK: THE LESBIAN MUSICAL by Lori Scarlett and Patricia Cotter – Commercial Option, 2008

CASEY AT THE BAT by Gordon Goodwin and Tom Child– Production at Brigham Young University 2008-2009

THE GYPSY KING by Randy Rogel and Kirby Ward – London production 2008-2009

KINGDOM by Aaron Jafferis and Ian Williams – Development at Weston Playhouse (VT) January 2008; 2008 Richard Rodgers Award for Musical Theatre.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE by Neil Bartram and Brian Hill – Commercial option 2007, Broadway opening 2009

TELL ME (f.k.a. The Chocolate Tree) by Marshall Paillet and A.D. Penedo – Full production at Actor's Cabaret of Eugene (OR) 2008

TINYARD HILL by Mark Allen and Thomas M. Newman – Development through 3 NAMT theatres – The Human Race Theatre Company (OH), Goodspeed Musicals (CT), and Red Mountain Theatre Company (AL)

From Festival 2006: VANITIES, A NEW MUSICAL – Broadway opening Fall 2008.

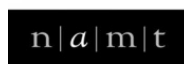
EMMA – Full production at TheatreWorks (CA) August 2007; Cincinnati Playhouse (OH) and The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis (MO) Fall 2008.

Other past Festival highlights include the Tony Award winners The Drowsy Chaperone and Thoroughly Modern Millie; off-Broadway successes such as I Love You Because, Songs for A New World, Striking 12, and Summer of '42; and regional hits like Ace, Children Of Eden, Harold and Maude, Honk!, and Meet John Doe.

The FESTIVAL OF NEW MUSICALS is funded by contributions to the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, a not-for-profit organization, and is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art, and by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency.

Admission to the FESTIVAL OF NEW MUSICALS is by invitation only and closed to the general public.

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