

NAMT taps tuners for fall showcase fest

By GORDON COX

One of the final projects by Wendy Wasserstein and Cy Coleman and a new musical from Glenn Slater are among the tuners to be showcased this fall in the National Alliance for Musical Theater's 20th annual Festival of New Musicals.

Industry-only showcase, which each year presents 45-minute samples of eight developing musicals to NAMT's membership of producers and presenters, has yielded past successes including "The Drowsy Chaperone" and "Thoroughly Modern Millie." Another alum, "Vaniety," opens on Broadway in the fall.

Slate of this year's fest, which runs Oct. 20-21, includes:

- "Pamela's First Musical," by the late Wasserstein (based on her own children's book) and the late Coleman, with lyrics by David Zippel. Tuner, about a young girl who is taken to her first Broadway show by her eccentric aunt, was seen for the first time in a benefit perf in Gotham in May.

- "Beatsville," with a book by Slater ("The Little Mermaid,"

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Wasserstein



Coleman

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"Leap of Faith") based on Roger Corman pic "A Bucket of Blood." Wendy Leigh Wilf provides the songs for this story of an artist whose sculptures may be made from sinister raw materials.

- "Barnstormer," from Douglas J. Cohen, composer of Broadway-bound "The Big Time," and book writer and lyricist Cheryl L. Davis. Plot centers on a black aviatrix pre-Amelia Earhart.

- Robert Bartley and Danny Whitman's "The Cuban and the Redhead," about Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball.

- "The Legend of Stagecoach Mary," by Thomas Mizer and Curtis Moore, centering on an ex-slave in the Wild West.

- Adam Gwon's "Ordinary Days," a series of interconnected tales about four New Yorkers and the lost notes for a graduate thesis.

- "See Rock City & Other Destinations," a rock-pop tuner about sightseers around the country, with book and lyrics by Adam Mathias and music by Brad Alexander.

- "The Yellow Wood," following a teenager struggling with ADD, with book by Michelle Elliott, music by Danny Larsen and lyrics co-written by both.

Fest is budgeted at between \$130,000 and \$150,000, according to NAMT exec director Kathy Evans, with funds coming from the NEA and the New York State Council on the Arts, among other orgs.

Event is preceded by NAMT's fall conference Oct. 18-19. Last year the conference drew about 150, with the fest attracting some 800.