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NEWS FROM THE O'NEILL

EUGENE O'NEILL THEATER CENTER ANNOUNCES 2008 NATIONAL MUSIC THEATER CONFERENCE SELECTIONS

NUMBER OF PROJECTS DOUBLES TO FOUR THIS YEAR

GALA HONORING 31 YEARS OF NMTC TO BE HELD JULY 19

The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center announced today that four projects have been selected for its 2008 National Music Theater Conference (NMTC) by Conference Artistic Director **Paulette Haupt**. This doubles the number of projects that have been scheduled at the O'Neill in recent seasons. Four teams of writers and composers will develop their works at the O'Neill's Waterford Campus with acclaimed actors, directors and music directors in an intensive series of rehearsals, discussions and public readings. **One of the four projects is sponsored in part through The ASCAP Residency.**

2008 marks the 31st year of the NMTC at the O'Neill. **To honor its three decades of creative excellence, the NMTC and its Artistic Director, Paulette Haupt, will be the focus of a gala fundraiser on July 19 at the O'Neill's Waterford Campus.** The event will feature songs from famed musicals developed at the NMTC, and performances by well-known alumni of the program. For tickets and more information about the Gala, please contact Suzanne Hendrix at 860-443-5378 x217 or shendrix@theoneill.org.

Since its founding in 1978, the National Music Theater Conference has developed and presented more than 100 musical works, including early works of award-winning writers and composers such as Tan Dun, Kirsten Childs, Andrew Lippa, Joe Masteroff, Steven Sater, Duncan Sheik and Jeannine Tesori. Arthur Kopit, Mario Fratti and Maury Yeston's *Nine*, developed at the O'Neill in 1979, won Tony Awards for Best Musical and Best Score in

1982, and for Best Revival of a Musical in 2003; Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx's *Avenue Q*, developed at the O'Neill in 2002, won three 2004 Tony Awards, including Best Musical. *In The Heights*, a 2005 NMTC project, received the Lucille Lortel and Outer Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding Musical when it played off-Broadway in 2007. It is currently playing at the Richard Rodgers Theatre on Broadway.

Ms. Haupt stated, "We are extremely pleased to be able to invite ten composers and authors to the 31st annual Conference. Each of the four works selected has a unique, contemporary point of view and represents some of the most promising emerging talents in music theater today. From an *a capella* musical, to soundtheater, to variations on Greek myths, to the way off-Broadway musical smash hit in Moscow, 1955, this summer promises to be entertaining and enlightening for all who attend."

O'Neill Executive Director Preston Whiteway added, "With these selections, the 31st National Music Theater Conference proves itself at the forefront of American theater once more. I want to highlight that we are doubling the number of projects that will be developed this year. The opportunity to have four projects at the Conference is exciting to all of us and to the future of musical theater in America. It is fitting that we will reintroduce a summer gala at the O'Neill, celebrating 31 years of creative activity for the National Music Theater Conference."

THE O'NEILL'S 2008 NATIONAL MUSIC THEATER CONFERENCE SELECTIONS ARE:

MYTH

Book, Music and Lyrics by John Mercurio

Performances: Sun., June 29 at 3:00 pm; Weds., July 2 at 8:00 pm; Fri., July 4 at 8:00 pm; Sat., July 5 at 8:00 pm

A contemporary riff on three Greek myths set in present day New York. When a disenchanted rock star, a frustrated mother and a slacker teenager take off separately to get their heart's desire, they discover just how intertwined their lives are. Only by working together can they find what they're after.

IN TRANSIT

Book, Music and Lyrics by Kristen Anderson-Lopez, James-Allen Ford, Russell M. Kaplan and Sara Wordsworth

Performances: Sat., July 5 at 3:00 pm; Sun., July 6 at 3:00 pm

An *a capella* musical that captures the thrills, frustrations, and lunacy of life "between stations." Intimate musical snapshots into the lives of random New Yorkers are brought to life through the eyes of a subway beat-boxer with an eclectic all-vocal score that draws upon pop, jazz, hip-hop, country, and even reggae.

MAX UNDERSTOOD

Book by Nancy Carlin; Lyrics by Nancy Carlin and Michael Rasbury; Music by Michael Rasbury

Performances: Fri., July 11 at 8:00 pm; Sun., July 13 at 3:00 pm

The transformative journey of a 7-year old autistic boy and those who love him, and how the need to communicate overcomes an unintelligible chasm. This sound-scaped musical may leave you feeling autistic yourself...and that's OK.

IRON CURTAIN

Book by Susan DiLallo, Lyrics by Peter Mills, Music by Stephen Weiner

Performances: Sat., July 12 at 8:00 pm; Weds., July 16 at 8:00 pm; Fri., July 18 at 8:00 pm; Sat., July 19 at 3:00 pm

New York, 1956: two down-on-their luck songwriters are kidnapped by the KGB and brought to Moscow, where they are forced to write Communist Propaganda musicals. A madcap farce about fame vs. freedom, filled with divas and dominatrixes, stooges and spies, mishaps and misdirects as our heroes try desperately to get back home.

This project is funded in part through The ASCAP Residency.

Schedules are subject to change. Tickets will be on sale beginning Wednesday, June 4. Please call the O'Neill Box Office at 860-443-1238 for prices and reservations.

The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, founded in 1964, is the pre-eminent center for the development of new works and new voices for the American theater. It has been home to more than 1,000 new works for the stage and 2,500 emerging artists. Scores of projects developed at the O'Neill have gone on to full productions at other theaters around the world, including Broadway, off-Broadway and major regional theaters. The O'Neill itself is the winner of a special Tony Award, the National Opera Award, the Jujamcyn Award for Theater Excellence and the Arts and Business Council Encore Award. The O'Neill's programs include the National Playwrights Conference, National Music Theater Conference, Puppetry Conference, Cabaret Conference, National Critics Institute, and the National Theater Institute, which includes semester-long, fully accredited intensive theater training programs in Waterford and Moscow and a six-week accredited summer program, Theatermakers. In addition, the O'Neill owns and operates the Monte Cristo Cottage, a National Historic Landmark and the childhood home of Nobel Prize-winning and four-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, Eugene O'Neill. For more information regarding the Center, please visit the O'Neill website at www.TheONeill.org or call 860-443-5378.

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ARTISTS' BIOS – 2008 NATIONAL MUSIC THEATER CONFERENCE

JOHN MERCURIO (Book, Music, Lyrics, MYTH)

John Mercurio is a Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation award recipient and received a Commendation Award from the Gilman & Gonzalez-Falla Musical Theater Foundation for his work in musical theatre. Most recently, John wrote the music to *Glimpses of the Moon* which premiered this January at the legendary Oak Room of the Algonquin Hotel in New York. He wrote the score and co-wrote the book to *Diva Diaries* which ran at the Lakeshore Theatre in Chicago, as well as the Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center and the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. John wrote the music for *A Time to Be Born*, based on the novel by Dawn Powell, which played at the Lucille Lortel Theatre as part of the New York Fringe Festival. His musical *The Riverhaven Book Club* ran at the Lyric Theatre in Florida. He wrote the music for *1001 Nights*, which was developed at the George Street Theatre in New Jersey. He developed his musical *A Tailor's Tale* at the O'Neill's National Music Theater Conference in 1999. Currently, John is writing songs for an original play with music, *Arturo's Window*, which tells the fascinating true story of John Jerome who embezzled four million dollars to help uninsured people with AIDS. He has also recently completed his first full-length young adult novel, "*The Lost Place*." John has composed the incidental music to plays and the scores to three ballets. He received his undergraduate degree from the Eastman School of Music, his masters in music composition at NYU and was a member of the BMI Advanced Musical Theatre Workshop.

KRISTEN ANDERSON-LOPEZ (Book, Music, Lyrics, IN TRANSIT)

Kristen Anderson-Lopez wrote book and lyrics for a 30-minute musical version of *Finding Nemo* for Disney/Pixar with her husband, Bobby Lopez (*Avenue Q*), which is currently playing six times a day in the Animal Kingdom at Disney World. She and her husband are now creating an original musical for the Roundabout Theatre. Kristen is a staff writer for *The Wonder Pets*, the critically-lauded, pre-school-age show on Nick, Jr. She recently began writing for *3rd and Bird*, a musical series premiering on the BBC in the fall. For adult audiences, she is working with Lisa DeSpain and Kate Whoriskey on a new musical set in 1917, New Orleans, for which she received a Dramatists' Guild Fellowship in 2006. She wrote book and lyrics for Theatreworks/USA's *Condensed Classics*, and a piece in *If You Give A Pig a Pancake*. Various songs from *In Transit* have appeared at off-Broadway theaters in New York and the New York International Fringe Festival, where *New York Magazine* declared it "The sleeper hit of the festival." TV credits include songs for Disney Channel's *Bear in the Big Blue House*, *Joan of Arcadia*, *Dawson's Creek* and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. Kristen is a member of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop (Advanced) where she received the Harrington Award for outstanding creative achievement.

JAMES-ALLEN FORD (Book, Music, Lyrics, IN TRANSIT)

James-Allen's work was most recently featured when "Four Days Home," his song with lyricist Sara Wordsworth from *In Transit*, was chosen to be part of NEO4, "an evening at the York Theatre Company celebrating the work of emerging musical theatre writers." His off-Broadway writing debut was with the production of *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie and Other Storybooks* at the Lucille Lortel Theater in Summer 2006 as part of Citibank and Theatreworks/USA's Free Summer Theatre for Children. Several writing teams contributed pieces to the show and his portion, entitled "Master Man," had lyrics by Jordan Allen-Dutton & Erik Weiner (*Bomb-itty of Errors*). He wrote music and co-wrote the book for *Martha! The Unauthorized Musical*. His *a cappella* musical for high school students, *Condensed Classics*, with lyricist Kristen Anderson-Lopez, toured nationally for TheatreWorks/USA. A member emeritus of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Advanced Workshop, James-Allen received the Harrington Award for outstanding creative achievement in musical theater songwriting. His work has been featured at the BMI Industry Cabaret, the Century Center's New Artists Festival, the Donnell Library Songbook series, the York Theater Developmental Reading Series, The New York Fringe Festival, the New York Musical Theater Festival and on nationally syndicated XM Radio. James-Allen holds a degree in music from Yale University where he sang with the Yale Whiffenpoofs. He has directed a *cappella* groups at Yale and Columbia and founded and directed the New York-based professional *a cappella* Bob Ross Juice Box whose collective talents and stories eventually morphed into the show *In Transit*.

RUSSELL M. KAPLAN (Book, Music, Lyrics, IN TRANSIT)

Russell M. Kaplan is a composer, pianist and theatre director. His original music has been performed in productions of Brecht, Shakespeare, cabaret and modern dance. Notable projects include *West Moon Street* (Prospect Theatre Company), *Baal* (Columbia University), *Screaming Shrubbery* (Third Rail Dance), *As You Like It* (Luna Repertory Company), and earlier incarnations of *In Transit* (New York International Fringe Festival, Merkin Hall, Duplex Cabaret Theatre, The Donnell Library). His Americana band The Randy Bandits – led by playwright Jim Knable – plays regularly around New York and Brooklyn; he has also toured with the soul-rock group Amandla, led by Ween drummer Claude Coleman. He currently studies jazz piano with keyboardist Erik Deutsch of the Charlie Hunter Trio. Russell is the founding Artistic Director of New Sounds Theatre, a production company dedicated to exploring and redefining the role of original music in contemporary theatre.

SARA WORDSWORTH (Book, Music, Lyrics, IN TRANSIT)

Sara Wordsworth wrote lyrics for the family musical *Changuita Perla* (University of Texas, Austin) and her screenplay, *Winter Rose*, was an award recipient in Los Angeles-based Upstream Production's Original Screenplay competition. She is currently developing book and writing lyrics for a full-length science fiction musical, *Chinadoll Overdrive*, with composer Linda Dowdell. She penned lyrics for the mini-musical comedy, *The Mitzvah on Madison*, which had performances in New York City at Musical Mondays Theatre Lab and in Woodstock, NY at the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony. Sara's work has recently been featured in NEO4. She served as a consultant for the

New Jersey State Board of Education's Arts Curriculum Development Committee, and was a writer's assistant for *Good Morning America* as well as a freelance field reporter for *The Gayle King Show*. Sara is a founding member of New York City-based a cappella group Bob Ross Juice Box, and a former member of Redline a cappella. Also a seasoned musical theatre performer and freelance recording artist, Sara has performed leading roles with companies including Chautauqua Opera and Seaside Music Theatre. Sara is a member of the Dramatists Guild of America, Inc. and a lyricist in the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop. She is an honors graduate of Fordham University, the College at Lincoln Center.

NANCY CARLIN (Book & Lyrics, MAX UNDERSTOOD)

Nancy Carlin has been a regional theatre artist for over 25 years. She is a director, an actor, a writer, a choreographer, a producer, and a teacher. She was a member of the acting company of the American Conservatory Theatre for seven seasons under Edward Hastings, and received her MFA with their conservatory under Bill Ball. She has been an associate artist with the California Shakespeare Theatre where she has acted in many productions, taught with their artistic learning initiative and been actively involved in their New Works/New Communities program, developing new work, most recently with playwright Octavio Solis on an adaptation of John Steinbeck's *Pastures of Heaven*. She is an affiliate artist of the Foothill Theatre Company in Nevada City, CA, where she has directed productions for over 12 seasons, and recently participated in their New Voices as a playwright with her developing musical, *Max Understood*. Nancy is also a company member of PlayGround, a San Francisco Bay Area source for new play development. She co-produced the feature film, *Haiku Tunnel* written by and starring Josh Kornbluth, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. She teaches with A.C.T., Cal Shakes, Berkeley Rep, Solano Community College, and coaches privately. Ms. Carlin is a member of SSDC, AEA, SAG, and AFTRA. She is the recipient of numerous Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle awards and DramaLogue awards as an actor and director. She holds a B.A. in comparative literature from Brown University and an M.F.A. from A.C.T.

MICHAEL RASBURY (Music & Lyrics, MAX UNDERSTOOD)

Since 2004, Michael Rasbury has been an Assistant Professor in Sound Design at the University of Virginia. He has served on the faculty of the School of the Performing Arts at Louisiana Tech University. Most recently, Michael composed music and sound for *Macbeth*, presented by the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Since 2007, he has worked with the Obie and Drama Desk award winning *Transport Group* in New York as sound designer for *Dark at the Top of the Stairs* and the two new musicals *Crossing Brooklyn* and *Marcy in the Galaxy*. Between 2004 and 2007 he composed music and sound for Lake Tahoe Shakespeare Festival's *Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. He has served as sound designer for *The Lost Colony* Outdoor Drama in Manteo, North Carolina, since 2006. In 2001, he toured Europe and the United States with the production of *An Alphabet*, a John Cage piece produced by the John Cage Trust. Also in 2001, he

wrote an orchestral score for Louisiana Tech University's theatrical adaptation of *The Leafmen and the Brave Good Bugs*, written by award winning children's author/illustrator, William Joyce. Michael composed music/sound for the 1998 and 1996 Humana Festivals for New American Playwrights at Actors Theatre of Louisville and for The Public in New York City. Michael has performed as a keyboardist/vocalist at two New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festivals with *The Lightnin' Bugs*, a Louisiana band. In 2003, he was recognized as the Louisiana State Funded Theatre Artist by receiving the Artist Fellowship Grant in Theatre presented by the Louisiana Division of the Arts.

SUSAN DILALLO (Book, IRON CURTAIN)

Susan DiLallo is a recipient of the coveted Kleban Foundation Award, given annually to "the most promising librettist in musical theater," as well as a 2008 Jonathan Larson Award. She wrote book and lyrics to an original comedy, *Once Upon a Time in New Jersey*, which won a Richard Rodgers Award as well as The Global Search for New Musicals Competition, Cardiff 2005. It has had several regional and international productions. Other credits include: book and lyrics for the Mattel/Clear Channel production of *Barbie Live! In Fairytopia* (based on the best-selling DVD); lyrics for *That's Life* (Outer Critics Circle nominee); book and lyrics for *Pinocchio, a Family Musical About Adoption* (winner, KIDDSTUFF New Play Competition, 2003); and the librettos for *Iron Curtain* (2006 NYC Innovative Theater Award, Best Production of a Musical) and *Hear Our Song* (Harmony Entertainment Group). She is currently working on the libretto for the Broadway-bound *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Susan has taught classes in creative writing (for children) and presentation techniques (for adults). She has worked as a dramaturge and editor for several playwrights and authors, was a humor columnist for *The Rye Record* (New York), and has won various Clios, Effies and Andys for her work in advertising. She received a B.S. from New York University. She is an alumna of the BMI, ASCAP and Dramatists Guild Musical Theater Workshops, and a member of ASCAP and the Dramatists Guild.

PETER MILLS (Lyrics, IRON CURTAIN)

Peter Mills received the 2007 Fred Ebb Award for emerging songwriters, 2005 Drama Desk Award nominations for his show *The Pursuit Of Persephone* (Best Music and Best Orchestrations), the 2003 Richard Rodgers New Horizons Award from the ASCAP Foundation, and a 2002 grant from the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation. This past year he wrote two new musicals: *The Rockae*, a rock musical based on *The Bacchae*, and *Honor*, an adaptation of *As You Like It* set in feudal Japan. Other recent projects include *Lonely Rhymes* (a comic song cycle), *The Alchemists, Illyria* (a musical adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, which had its regional premiere at The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey in Fall 2004, with a cast album released in April 2005) and *The Taxi Cabaret* (published by Samuel French in Fall 2004). With Cara Reichel, he wrote *The Flood*, which was selected for the ASCAP Musical Theater Workshop (2001). *Marco Polo*, written with composer Deborah Abramson, was selected for the ASCAP Musical Theater Workshop in 2000, and Peter and Deborah were chosen as 2000-01 Dramatists Guild Fellows. Peter holds an M.F.A. in Musical

Theater Writing from New York University's Tisch School for the Arts and a degree in English/Dramatic Literature from Princeton University. He is a founding member of Prospect Theater Company. www.pcmills.com

STEPHEN WEINER (Music, IRON CURTAIN)

Stephen Weiner is a winner of the Richard Rodgers, Jonathan Larson and ASCAP Musical Theater Awards. His Broadway debut is upcoming with *The Hudsucker Proxy* (book & lyrics by Glenn Slater). Steve's Off Broadway credits include the Obie Award-winning *newyorkers* (MTC) which also received Drama Desk and Lucille Lortel nominations, and *Iron Curtain* (2006 New York Innovative Theater Award, Best Musical). Regional credits include *Once Upon A Time in New Jersey* (Village Theater, Marriott Theater, Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts, UK), and *Spittin Image* (Forum Theater, NJ). Disney Feature Animation: *Marco Polo*. Steve's work has been performed in concerts, showcases and cabarets in NYC. He is a member of ASCAP and the Dramatist Guild.

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