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McCartney, Edelman, Larsen, Ayers and Babiak Added to NAMT Festival

By Adam Hetrick

Tony Award-winning lyricist David Zippel and three-time Tony-nominated actress Dee Hoty will host the NAMT Songwriters Showcase on Oct. 19.

The Songwriters Showcase, presented at 2:15 PM at New World Stages, highlights the work of emerging composers in a concert setting. NAMT also features 45-minute excerpts of developing musicals as part of the Festival of New Musicals weekend, running through Oct. 20.

The Songwriters Showcase, directed by Branden Huldeen, will feature songs from *The Average Achievers Club* (music/lyrics by Benji Goldsmith, book/lyrics by Jonathan Karpinos); *The Black Suits* (music/lyrics by Joe Iconis, book by Robert Maddock); *Crazy, Just Like Me* (by Drew Gasparini); *The Great American Race* (by Patrick Barry); *POP!* (book/lyrics by Maggie-Kate Coleman, music by Anna K. Jacobs); *Southern Comfort* (book/lyrics by Dan Collins, music by Julianne Wick); *Venice* (by Eric Rosen and Matt Sax, with additional music by Curtis Moore); and *While I Wait* (music by Deborah Abramson, book/lyrics by Amanda Yesnowitz).

NAMT has also announced additional casting for the eight musicals that will be featured in the festival. Newly added cast members include Tony nominees Gregg Edelman (*Tale of Two Cities*, *City of Angels*) and Liz Larsen (*The Most Happy Fella*, *Hairspray*), as well as Liz McCartney (*Taboo*, *South Pacific*), Frank Applegate (*Young Frankenstein*), Kate Shindle (*Legally Blonde*), Jen Babiak (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Jill Abramovitz (*Fame Becomes Me*) and Becca Ayers (*South Pacific*, *Sarah, Plain and Tall*).

The Festival of New Musicals productions and casting follow:

Gordon Greenberg stages the new musical *Band Geeks!*, which he co-authored with Tommy Newman, Gaby Alter and Mark Allen. Musical director is David Loud. The cast includes Jill Abramovitz (*Fame Becomes Me*), Jared Gertner (*Ordinary Days*), Marie-France Arcilla (*Lizzie Borden*), Aaron J. Albano (*Spelling Bee*), Alex Brightman (*Wicked*), Adam Chanler-Berat (*Next To Normal*), Patti Murin (*Xanadu*), Griffin Matthews (*Paper Mill's 1776*), Jenni Barber (*Spelling Bee*), John Bolton (*Curtains*), Dwayne Clark (*In The Heights*) and Kat Palardy (*First Wives Club*).

Victoria Bussert directs the Creighton Irons and Sean Mahoney musical *Factory Girls*, which features musical direction by Matt Hinkley. Casting includes Kate Rockwell (*Legally Blonde*), Carrie Manolakos (*Mamma Mia!*), Anika Larsen (*Xanadu*, *Avenue Q*), David Larsen (*Billy Elliot*), Steel Burkhardt (*Hair*), Kate Ferber, Lindsay Mendez

(*Everyday Rapture*), Dana Steingold (*Spelling Bee*), Brian Sutherland (*1776*), Cortney Wolfson (*Legally Blonde*), Kayce Cummings and Nicole Weiss.

Oliver Butler will direct the Clay McLeod Chapman and Kyle Jarrow musical *Hostage Song*, with musical direction by Nathan Leigh. Casting includes Jeb Brown (*Grease*), Susan Goodwillie (*Mourning Becomes Electra*), John Hickok (*Aida*), Maria Christina Oliveras (*Night Sky*) and Caesar Samoya (*Under Fire*).

Michael Mahler and Alan Schmuckler's *How Can You Run with a Shell On Your Back?* is staged by Kent Nicholson, with musical direction by Deborah Abramson. The cast features *Spring Awakening* veterans Gideon Glick and Emma Hunton, as well as Carey Anderson (*Mamma Mia!*), Preston Sadleir and Derrick Trumbly.

The Susan DiLallo, Stephen Weiner and Peter Mills musical *Iron Curtain* features direction by Cara Reichel with musical direction by Remy Kurs. The cast includes Fred Applegate (*The Producers*), Maria Couch, Gregg Edelman (*Wonderful Town*), David Foley, Jr., Liz Larsen (*A New Brain*), Lisa Mindelle, Dara Seitzman, Doug Shapiro, Robby Sharpe (*The Pursuit of Persephone*), Jim Stanek (*Little Women*) and Betsey Wolfe (*Everyday Rapture*).

Barbara Anselmi and Brian Hargrove's *It Shoulda Been You* will star Tony winners Harriet Harris (*Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Cry-Baby*) and Debra Monk (*Curtains*, *Redwood Curtain*), as well as Lisa Howard (*Spelling Bee*), Becca Ayers (*South Pacific*, *Sarah*, *Plain and Tall*), Jeremy Ellison Gladstone (*The Fantasticks*), Nathan Lee Graham (*Wig Out!*), Joe Grifasi (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood*), Colin Hanlon (*I Love You Because*), Marla Mindelle (*The Drowsy Chaperone*), Michael Tucker (*Enter Laughing*) and Nick Wyman (*Catch Me If You Can*). Michael Bush directs with T.O. Sterrett as musical director.

Sara Cooper and Zach Redler's *Memory Is the Mother of All Wisdom*, reunites its cast and creative team from the Barrington Stage Company, including director Joe Calarco, musical director Vadim Feichner and cast members Leslie Kritzer (*A Catered Affair*, *Rooms*) and Catherine Cox (*Baby*).

Duane Nelsen's *Ripper* is staged by John Simpkins with music direction by Andy Einhorn. The cast features Elena Shaddow (*The Light in the Piazza*), Jen Babiak (*Fiddler on the Roof*), Liz McCartney (*Taboo*, *South Pacific*), Kate Shindle (*Legally Blonde*), Cyrilla Baer (*Adding Machine*), Neal Benari (*Aida*), Joan Hess (*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*), Eric William Morris (*Mamma Mia!*) and Bruce Winant (*Ragtime*).

While the Festival is created for producers and industry members, the general public can obtain free, stand-by tickets the day of the festival.

For more information visit [NAMT](http://NAMT.org).

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Founded in 1985 and based in New York City, The National Alliance for Musical Theatre is a national service organization dedicated exclusively to musical theatre. Kathy Evans is the executive director for the organization with members sprinkled throughout 33 states and six countries.



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