

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

Harriet Harris, Leslie Kritzer, Debra Monk, et al. Set for NAMT's Festival of New Musicals

By Brian Scott Lipton



Preliminary casting has been announced for The National Alliance of Musical Theatre's 21st Annual Festival of New Musicals, to take place October 19-20 at New World Stages.

Gordon Greenberg will direct *Band Geeks* about the misfit members of a high school marching band, by Tommy Newman, Gordon Greenberg, Gaby Alter, and Mark Allen. The company will include Jared Gertner, Aaron J. Albano, Alex Brightman, Adam Chanler-Berat, Patti Murin, and Griffin Matthews.

Carrie Manolakos, Anika Larsen, David Larsen, Steel Burkhardt, Kate Ferber, Lindsay Mendez, Dana Steingold, Brian Sutherland, and Cortney Wolfson will be featured in *Factory Girls* by Creighton Irons and Sean Mahoney, a musical about a young woman who leaves New Hampshire to work in a Massachusetts mill in 1844 and eventually fights the corporation when conditions deteriorate. Victoria Bussert will direct and Matt Hinkley will provide musical direction.

Hostage Song, by Clay McLeod Chapman and Kyle Jarrow, which focuses on two hostages in a war-torn country, will feature direction by Nathan Leigh and musical direction by Oliver Butler. Casting will be announced at a later date.

Former *Spring Awakening* stars Gideon Glick and Emma Hunton have been cast in *How Can You Run With a Shell on Your Back?*, by Michael Mahler and Alan Schmuckler, about a stranger who tells Aesop's fables to six students stuck in detention. The piece will be directed by Kent Nicholson and feature musical direction by Deborah Abramson.

Cara Reichel will stage *Iron Curtain*, a farce about American songwriters kidnapped by the KGB to act as show doctors for a communist propaganda musical, by Susan DiLallo, Stephen Weiner, and Peter Mills. Remy Kurs will serve as musical director. Casting will be announced shortly.

Tony Award winners Harriet Harris and Debra Monk will join Sebastian Arcelus and Lisa Howard in *It Shoulda Been You*, a comedy about a wedding, by Brian Hargrove and Barbara Anselmi, directed by Michael Bush and featuring musical direction by T.O. Sterrett.

Sara Cooper and Zach Redler's *Memory Is the Mother of All Wisdom*, about a woman with Alzheimer's and the estranged daughter who moves back to takes care of her, will be directed by Joe Colarco and will feature Leslie Kritzer and Catherine Cox.

Duane Nelsen's *Ripper*, a Victorian thriller about an illusionist who saws women in half while a reporter looks into a series of murders, will be staged by John Simpkins and have musical direction by Andy Einhorn. Elena Shaddow is set to star.

NAMT is an industry event, but members of the public can attend the readings if there is space. For more information, visit www.namt.org.