

LULLABY

A play with music by **Michael Elyanow**
Featuring Music and Lyrics by **Garrison Starr, Chris Dallman,
Curt Schneider and Michael Elyanow**
Directed by **Jeremy B. Cohen**
Music Direction by **Peter Morrow**

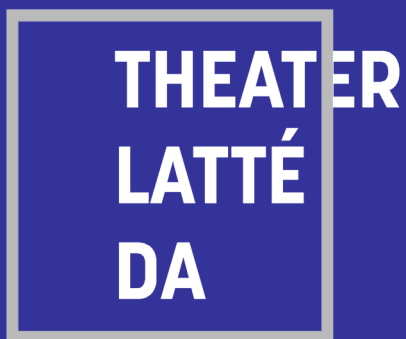


PLAY GUIDE

World Premiere
January 12 - February 7, 2016
Ritz Theater

**THEATER
LATTÉ
DA**

THEATER MUSICALLY



THEATER MUSICALLY

Founded in 1998 by Peter Rothstein and Denise Prosek, Theater Latté Da is entering its 18th year of combining music and story to illuminate the breadth of the human condition. Peter and Denise began their successful collaboration in 1994 by privately producing five original cabarets to showcase Twin Cities talent. They discovered that by placing equal emphasis on music and storytelling, they could weave tapestries of engaging, challenging and often surprising narratives that resonated with people on many levels. Theater Latté Da officially incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1998 and to this day remains committed to a rigorous experimentation with music and story that expands the art form and speaks to a contemporary audience.

In 1998, Theater Latté Da began performing at the intimate 120-seat Loring Playhouse. By 2007, Theater Latté Da Productions were playing to sold-out houses. At this time, the company began searching for spaces with different performance configurations to meet the unique needs of its productions. Since 2007, Theater Latté Da has produced shows at the Guthrie Theater, Ordway, Pantages Theatre, Southern Theater, History Theatre, Fitzgerald Theater, the Rarig Center Stoll Thrust Theatre and The Lab Theater. Matching its productions to appropriate performance venues has given Theater Latté Da audiences the opportunity to experience a wide variety of spaces and neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities.

Theater Latté Da is now emerging as a leader in the musical theater art form. Theater Latté Da boasts an impressive history of work that has received significant popular and critical acclaim. Its world premieres include *Passage of Dreams*, *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*, *Steerage Song*, and *A Christmas Carol Petersen*. Unique approaches to classics have resulted in boldy re-imagined productions of *La Bohème*, *Cabaret* and *OLIVER!*, among others.

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Lullaby is being produced by Theater Latté Da at the Ritz Theater.

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Previews on January 13, 14 and 15
Opening Night on January 16, 2016

A NOTE FROM PETER ROTHSTEIN

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR - THEATER LATTÉ DA

The musical theater is America's great contribution to the dramatic arts and one of the most significant contributions to the performing arts. Of all the performing arts, the United States can claim as our own: Jazz, Modern Dance, and the Musical Theater. By its very nature the musical theater is the most collaborative, the most encompassing of all art forms. It incorporates drama, dance, music, poetry, visual arts, and fashion. And unlike many of our art forms which were birthed from a given Monarchy or the Church, the musical theater sprung up from the people. The fusion of immigrants on New York's Lower East Side, working-class people of European and African descent created a new sound that became American Popular Song. And the writers of American Popular Song eventually fused those songs into story assembled around a single narrative and the musical was born. In some circles the Musical is considered less than because of its populist status but I believe that is its greatest strength. It was born out of the common people and it speaks to the common people.

A beautiful thing about working in the theater is I get to collaborate with those who came before me. It might not be a two-way street exactly, but I feel like I get to collaborate with Shakespeare with Puccini, with Rogers and Hammerstein. However, there is nothing more rewarding than having living writers and living composers in the room together. That is the heart of *NEXT*: storytellers, story-receivers and story-makers all in the space at the same time.

As a writer and a director, I often feel like I hear the show for the first time when I experience it alongside that first audience. The communal nature of what we do needs audience in order to be complete. Throughout *NEXT*, the post-show feedback sessions are incredibly helpful to the writers, but just being able to hear the play in a room full of story-receivers is vital to the development process; it's the final link that makes theater theater.

A number of years ago, I had a two-year fellowship from Theater Communications Group and the



National Endowment for the Arts. I spent much of that fellowship visiting and assessing new work programs around the country. I created *NEXT* based on what I saw working and what I felt was missing. *NEXT* puts the writers at the center of the process. It is focused exclusively on moving the work forward. Most other development opportunities, especially in NYC, are focused on showcasing the work for potential producers, artistic directors and agents. Our series focuses entirely on the work, and engaging the audience in the creative process.

As I continue to connect with my national colleagues, I believe what we are doing with *NEXT* is truly unique. There are certainly other regional theaters with new work programs but relatively few of them are giving the writers a two week workshop, three public readings with time for rewrites between. Also, few of these programs are taking place in a community as rich in talent as the Twin Cities. Many producers or writing teams are looking for a theater to "develop" their work but what they are usually looking for is a building and an audience, with most of the talent coming from New York. *NEXT* is about intersection, connecting playwrights, composers and lyricists, some from Minnesota but many from beyond, with our incredible pool of local talent--actors, directors, musical directors and dramaturgs living and working in the Twin Cities. And each year our writers are blown away by the talent, skill and wisdom of our local artists.

While *NEXT* is a relatively new initiative, new work has always been a part of our DNA. Latté Da was



incorporated in 1998 and we have been creating new musical theater from the beginning. That new work has taken many forms. Sometimes it's been a wholly original work, sometimes it's been a new story told with old songs, and sometimes it's been a new orchestration that radically reimagines a given work, as we did with *LA BOHEME*. One of our early successes was a show written by Tod Petersen and myself called *OH SHIT, I'M TURNING INTO MY MOTHER*. *OH SHIT*, as we came to call it, developed a cult like following and we revived it numerous times. We went on to present the show at various conferences, in partnership with the Mall of America, we had an ongoing partnership with an organization of women lawyers, and we took the show to NYC where it ran for a month in a cabaret venue downtown. The success of that show led Tod and I to create *A CHRISTMAS CAROLE PETERSON*, which we produced for nine seasons, first at the Loring Playhouse and then a couple years at the Ordway. The success of *ACCP* supported much of the other work the company produced during those years.

Our new work has often defied categorization. *PASSAGE OF DREAMS* for example was a triptych of aerial musicals. *BANKRUPT CITY BALLAD* was a musical about the dance marathons of the Great Depression that we created in partnership with a modern dance company. And *ALL IS CALM* was conceived as a radio musical docudrama. The world premiere of *AIC* was broadcast live on Minnesota Public Radio and subsequently toured for seven seasons and has been broadcast in countless radio stations around much of the world.

NEXT is the next logical step for us to take as a company. Institutionalizing our commitment to new work, building a pipeline of shows, and expanding our circle of storytellers. I believe we have a responsibility to support not only our actors, designers and musicians but also our playwrights, composers and lyricists. We have the unique opportunity to decide what stories need to be told at this point in history, what story-makers need to be heard, what group people need to be understood. How do we instigate ever expanding circles of compassion?

I am the youngest of eleven children. I am an uncle five dozen times over. Legacy, to say the least, is a powerful dynamic in my family. I truly believe there is no greater responsibility than being a parent, and no legacy more powerful than what a parent passes onto a child. Garland Wright, the former Artistic Director of the Guthrie was asked by his board to publicly critique each production at the end of the season. At his final board meeting he apologized to the board for not being able to do so. He explained that his productions were like his children and he would never ask them to publicly critique their children. Garland had a profound impact on me as an emerging director and I fully understand what he was talking about. Our productions become our children, in a way.

If this organization has any kind of legacy, it will be new work. New musicals or plays with music that we foster and that live on behind closing night. And if none of those shows "make it" (Let's be honest, few do.) we will have helped create the next generation of playwrights, composers and lyricists. That is legacy.



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

JEREMY B. COHEN

"Sometimes being a friend means mastering the art of timing. There is a time for silence. A time to let go and allow people to hurl themselves into their own destiny. And a time to prepare to pick up the pieces when it's all over." - Octavia Butler

I remember my son teaching me a new language of joy.

I remember learning the true love of smooching baby fat and the need to gnaw on his cheek.

I remember the moment he was placed in my arms and how all of my senses transformed.

I remember being covered in puke and piss and poop and drool. And laughing about it.

I remember not wanting to go to sleep because I didn't want to miss out on a single instant of anything brilliant he might do. Like giggle. Or fart. Or blink.

And how I wanted to protect him from the world.

And how I wanted to expose him to the world.

And how I wanted to teach him about the world.

And being so completely sleep-deprived that when it was 4am and I'd have just done another change and feeding, I'd be rocking him back to sleep in the living room, and I remember a whole month where I thought I saw spiders climbing down from the ceiling.

And losing whole days at a time in the sleeplessness.

And 13 years later, I would give anything to have it all back.

The friendships we formed, the relationships that fused forever -- all born out of the challenges and the laughter and the frustrations and the excitement - these bonds have never dissipated over time...and he still knows all those people that loved him into being.



And I don't know how I would've done it alone.

Without my brilliant partner, constantly facing his fears.

Without my friends gathered around: cooking food for each other, wiping each other's kids' runny noses, doing mediocre yoga together, forgiving each other when we'd fall asleep in the middle of the other person's sentence.

And I realized that the heart of this play that Michael and I have been making over this whole time is about someone who's lost her best friend along the way - how they'd stood by one another, brought each other's best selves out, pushed each other and ultimately created a life together. And it clarified my understanding of people's fear of loss and betrayal, and just how potent it can all be. How paralyzing.

And a few months ago, when Michael challenged himself to take the original draft of the play and completely rewrite it towards the artist and parent he is today, I felt that flush of deep love and respect for my own best friend...all over again. 20 years later.

Welcome to just a little slice of our story.

(This production is dedicated to the memory of the gorgeous Scott Lenhart and to the immovable love of his partner and best friend, Tommy Rapley. Truer love, deeper friendship you could not find. You will be loved and missed every day.)

IT'S BETTER WITH A BAND

BY ROB WEINERT-KENDT

The American musical's next wave isn't jukebox shows and rock stars—it's a jam session between indie bands and theatre artists making vital new music together.

It's a funny thing, what's happened to the word "musical." Like "novel," this simple adjective has grown into a giant noun encompassing an entire art form. But even as the term has inflated, the form itself seems to have shrunk. Even after *Rent*, even after "Glee," the American musical has a particular vocal and compositional sound, and we all know it when we hear it.

For all their pleasures, and for all the crowds musicals continue to pack in, stage music itself has become a niche genre, and apart from a devoted cadre of show fans, it's not what most of us choose to listen to on our iPods, on our Pandora stations, in concert halls or on our party playlists. Indeed, though it's got the word "music" inside it, the varieties of music typically excluded by that innocent little word, "musical," could fill several lifetimes of listening—and for many audiences stubbornly immune to the charms of musical theatre, they do.

Arguably, there's new blood pumping into the form via so-called "jukebox" shows, which range from bio-concerts (*Fela!*, *Million Dollar Quartet*) to broadly narrativized samplers (*Movin' Out*, *Rock of Ages*, *Mamma Mia!*); or via theatricalized concept albums, like Green Day's *American Idiot* or Matthew Sweet's *Girlfriend* (both originally mounted at Berkeley Repertory Theatre before moving on, to Broadway and to Actors Theatre of Louisville, respectively). That pop stars like Elton John and U2 have conquered Broadway may be most notable in how exceptional their cases are. And the fact that not-so-huge stars like Duncan Sheik (*Spring Awakening*), Lin-Manuel Miranda (*In the Heights*) and Tom Kitt (*Next to Normal*) have pressed pop sounds into fresh storytelling service is certainly some cause for hope.

But perhaps the most heartening and transformative trend in American musicals—and we might as well reclaim the word, all the better to broaden its purview—is a swelling wave of hybrid shows created, and often performed, by indie bands and singer/songwriters. Some begin as staged concept albums (the Lisps' *Futurity*, Walter Sickert & the Army of Broken Toys' *28 Seeds*, Black Francis and the Catastrophic Theatre's *Bluefinger*). Some begin as devised-theatre pieces in which live music is as integral as the script (PigPen's *The Old Man and the Old Moon*, Young Jean Lee's *We're Gonna Die*). Some begin as quasi-cabarets built around performers with stories to tell and/or roles to play (Stew and Heidi Rodewald's *Passing Strange*, Ethan Lipton's *No Place to Go*, and the trannie granny of them all, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*). Some even begin as essentially traditional musicals, but with the clear stamp, and often the actual presence, of their composer/performers (Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová's *Once*, Dave Malloy's *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*, Groovelily's *Sleeping Beauty Wakes*).

None are Broadway-tooled properties by brand-name stars, though some (*Once*, *Passing Strange*) do end up on the Main Stem. And while most are mere flickers on the radar of the nation's resident theatres and play-development houses, that is rapidly changing. In a trend analogous to the way "devised" ensemble work is increasingly welcomed by institutional theatres (see "Group Think," March '13), bands and actor/musicians are teaming with directors, playwrights and dramaturgs as full partners on new stage pieces, not simply rolling their gear through the stage door just before tech rehearsals to play through scores fully notated by a single composer.

It was César Alvarez, the lanky, curl-topped frontman for the folk-rock band the Lisps, who floated an analogy between novels and musicals in a recent interview. Since he and his



From left, Jessi Suzuki, Lauren Worsham and Megan Stern in *Sky-Pony: Raptured*, produced by the Play Company in NYC (photo by Esty Stein); Grooveilly's Gene Lewin, Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda in *Wheelhouse* at TheatreWorks in California (photo by Tracy Martin); PigPen Theatre Company in *The Old Man and the Old Moon* at the Gym at Judson in NYC (photo by Joan Marcus)

band wrote *Futurity*, a concept album about the Civil War-era inventor of a steam-powered artificial intelligence, which was staged last year at Cambridge, Mass.'s American Repertory Theater and at Minneapolis's Walker Arts Center (and will hit New York in 2014-15, with Soho Rep co-producing), they've been bitten by the theatre bug. They recently scored and appeared in the Foundry Theatre's Off-Off Broadway revival of Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*, and they're developing a show with Soho Rep artistic director Sarah Benson at Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor. And while the Lisps still tour and record, Alvarez now thinks of himself, at least in part, as a theatre artist.

"Musical theatre has become a genre, but it's actually not a genre!" exclaimed Alvarez, climbing on what is clearly a favorite hobbyhorse. "You hear from musicians all the time, 'Oh, I hate musicals,' which is like saying, 'Oh, I hate novels.' It would be as if somebody invented the novel, and then for hundreds of years, the only kind that became popularized was the mystery novel." He feels that the American musical has been similarly constrained, sonically and aesthetically: "The classic musicals, they're classics—but they don't encompass the entire spectrum of what musical theatre can be. That's why I say musical theatre has been genre-fied in a way that is a complete disservice to the form. It's basically music, dialogue and narrative on a stage, telling a story. That's it! It doesn't say how to sing or what kind of music."

In the case of *Futurity*, what began as a staged concert at New York's Zipper Factory blossomed into a play-with-a-band, with Alvarez and singer Sammy Tunis taking lead roles and drummer Eric Farber sitting at the helm of a contraption he constructed called the Steam Brain—which Alvarez described as

a "handmade percussive machine which is a musical instrument, a storytelling device and an interactive set-piece." The style of the score, true to the Lisps' artisanal indie-rock sound, encompasses twangy folk, old-timey Americana and pristine chamber pop. And the style of the piece, even as it's added a script, by Alvarez and playwright Molly Rice, is still centered around the Lisps' presence.

The challenge, as director Benson put it, was "trying to figure out how to keep it being a show where the band was telling the story, and yet blow it out into a musical. When I was stuck, I would just think, 'What would the Lisps do?' Casting solutions, design solutions—all came out of that musical language."

A musical lexicon is certainly what Stew and Heidi Rodewald developed in the band the Negro Problem, but it wasn't until Bill Bragin, the former director of the Public Theater's in-house nightclub, Joe's Pub, recognized the theatricality of the duo's wry, tuneful songs and Stew's crackling stage patter, that they "stumbled into a whole other career," as Stew recently put it. The resulting show, *Passing Strange*, moved through Sundance Institute Theatre Lab, Berkeley Rep and the Public before landing on Broadway, where it didn't run long but spawned an HBO movie and garnered a Tony for Stew's book. Now Stew and Rodewald are in the midst of three new musical theatre projects: *The Total Bent*, a show for the Public in which they don't appear; a commission from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for an autobiographical show called *Family Album* (in which they may appear); and one for Washington, D.C.'s Studio Theatre.

Meanwhile, at Joe's Pub, in the wake of *Passing Strange*, Bragin's successor, Shanta Thake, has helmed an NEA-backed commissioning project

called *New York Voices*, which brings together musicians with directors and playwrights and puts the Public's dramaturgical resources at their disposal. Funded work has included Lipton's *No Place to Go*, as well as shows by such artists as Lady Rizo, Toshi Reagon, Angeliqve Kidjo and Abigail Washburn. With all of them, Thake said recently, the point is not to create a one-size-fits-all template but to be sure that "what makes the performers amazing is at the center of the show."

Indeed, retaining the aesthetic imprint of the writer/performers is the key distinguishing feature of this hybrid form. That's not because having the artists perform what they've written is a huge marquee draw, since most of them are not widely known; it has more to do with the immediacy and integrity, and the fresh, unstudied theatrical energy that a seasoned band can bring to the stage.

"I think all music performers are actors," declared Stew, as ever a voluble, Falstaffian figure. "Every guy in a band who knows that 500 people are watching him is not going to stand exactly like that when he's at home. But the beauty of musicians as actors is that they're really smart actors—they're smart enough to know that the game is really making it look like it's natural." Alvarez, for one, sees a historical analogy.

"It's really amazing to hear Frank Sinatra do a Cole Porter song, but it's also just as amazing to hear the Beatles play the Beatles," he said. "That was the big revolution that happened in pop music, and I honestly think there's a thing happening in musical theatre, which is that it's incredible to watch the people who made the thing do the thing. And that's what you get when you see a band perform a musical."

There's also a literal immediacy to the band model. The folk/pop trio Groovelily was formed in 1994 when Brendan Milburn, a student in New York University's musical theatre program, found himself "cowed and freaked out about how long it took, from putting pen to paper, how much money and how many people, to get a musical up." Then he met the electric violinist Valerie Vigoda and marvelled that "she would write a song that day and play it that night at Sidewalk Café. With a band, you can get from

writing to performing very quickly."

Indeed, Groovelily, which includes drummer Gene Lewin, completed their first show—the alternative-holiday piece *Striking 12*—in the van on the way to the first rehearsal at Philadelphia's Prince Music Theater in 2002. But while Groovelily's members are still central to their shows' creation and initial performances (including the autobiographical *Wheelhouse* at Palo Alto, Calif.'s TheatreWorks, and the new La Jolla Playhouse/TheatreWorks commission *Ernest Shackleton Loves Me*), they know that to build a career in the theatre is to create license-able properties, as surely as building a career in music means (or used to mean) creating a catalogue of published songs and recordings.

"If you write a show so only you can perform it, you're really limiting the future of that show," said Milburn. "From pretty early on, our literary agent was pushing us to take *Striking 12* and turn it into something else. Not every high school has a singing electric violinist."

Among Groovelily's New York berths has been the new-work incubator Ars Nova, a club/theatre space that has nurtured its share of performer-created musicals, from the pirate/puppet romp *Jollyship the Whiz Bang* to Malloy's *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*. Ars Nova's artistic director, Jason Eagan, acknowledges the appeal of creator-performed shows but believes that works of substance can survive recasting.

"In writing *Natasha*, Dave put himself in the middle of it," conceded Eagan of Malloy's pulsing, through-sung adaptation of a section of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, in which the composer conducts an ensemble of actor/musicians and performs the pivotal narrator/actor role of Pierre. The show, which Malloy said he wrote in a mere 18 months or so (immediacy!), ran last fall at Ars Nova and will reopen Off-Broadway on May 1. "And yes, there's something about seeing Dave at the center of the piece that is very cool and exciting. We'll be able to say, 'We saw Dave himself do it'; I can imagine if we saw Sondheim do *Merrily We Roll Along*, that would be pretty exciting, too. But as with *Hedwig*, the role he's written for himself feels very three-dimensional—it's something that an actor could

take on."

Going the other direction, from theatre to music, is form-breaking playwright Young Jean Lee, who wrote and performed her odd, endearing indie-rock cabaret *We're Gonna Die* with a band for a full run at Joe's Pub in 2011, and is now touring it internationally. Though in her rendering, the show—in which she ostensibly treats her childhood, her parents, dating and death—had an intimate, disarmingly personal feeling, she said she wrote it "so that it's not gender- or ethnic-specific." Which is how it ended up getting interpreted by downtown performance mainstay Jim Findlay, a biker-sized hulk of a man from whose mouth both Lee's narration and songs sounded so different, she said, that "I completely forgot I ever said them."

In developing the show, Lee found the meeting of minds between her and her band, Future Wife (with whom she has recorded an album of the *We're Gonna Die* songs, and with whom she plans to tour as a bona fide rock band outside of theatre venues) natural and complementary. "I feel like rock people are very theatrical, and theatrical people are rock-and-roll—there's a lot of similarities." Or, as Stew memorably put it, "I have learned that a great actor can do anything, even sing. Certainly sing in a rock band. A great actor maybe can't necessarily sing *Oklahoma!*, but a great actor can sing any song of mine. I'm convinced of it, because I'm not a great singer either, but I buy the songs I'm singing, and I sell it. I've seen actors who literally don't have singer on their résumé kill on our songs."

There's some precedent for the band-musical form, and for its replicability. *Pump Boys and Dinettes* trucked to Broadway in 1982 featuring its original cast of writer/musician/actors, and has since been restaged all over the world, including in a long sit-down run in Chicago. (A Broadway revival helmed by John Doyle was slated for this month, but was scuttled, with the producers citing an overcrowded season.) In the case of last year's Tony winner for best musical, the yearny folk romance *Once*, songwriters Hansard and Irglová—who appeared more or less as themselves in the scruffy, lovable 2006 independent film—aren't in the stage show at all. But the musical's

considerable appeal has much to do with the show's intimate sound world, forged by an estimable ensemble of 12 actors/musicians.

Martin Lowe, who won a Tony for orchestrating the guitar-heavy, Irish-folk-inflected score, described his job as more analogous to producing a record than to traditional notation. "I transcribed the songs as best as I could from the soundtrack recordings," said Lowe from London, where he's preparing the show's U.K. debut with director John Tiffany and playwright Enda Walsh. "Then I went into the rehearsal room, and I didn't throw those parts away, exactly, but this was a company of extraordinary people. They'd say, 'I'd love to play mandolin in this song,' or, 'I've brought my ukulele in today.' There was a lot of experimentation; they own those arrangements."

"At this point, it's the greatest band I've ever played with," gushed Lucas Papaelias, a seasoned actor/musician who plays guitar, mandolin, banjo and drums—as well as the part of a rowdy Czech immigrant—in the *Once* ensemble, and who said he came up with his own parts for much of the music onstage, in the time-honored collaborative way of bands from folk to rock to jazz. His high praise for the *Once* troupe, which has gigged together as a band outside their Broadway job, is saying something: Papaelias is a veteran of New York's rock club scene and a writer/performer of hybrid shows himself (*Ithaca*, *Pyramidica*). He knows as well as anyone what bands can bring to the stage.

"Being in any musical relationship is the trickiest, most intense relationship you can have," said Papaelias. "When you go see a band that's starting to blow up, that you get in on the ground floor with, you feel the energy. A lot of that energy has to do with the fact that they even exist, that they've even been able to keep their shit together and not kill each other." The theatre, Papaelias said, can harness and hone that energy.

"The theatre offers a structure, the world of how you rehearse, of telling a story—all of the stuff that is set up that you don't normally have as a musician or a band," said Papaelias. Alvarez agreed: "There's such a code of collaboration in the theatre; even people who don't know

each other can immediately access this code and create functional—and sometimes dysfunctional—working relationships.” By contrast, in music, “There’s no code, and all the drama in bands is treated with such horror—there’s a lot more blindness about how you manage collaboration.”

Another attraction of theatre work for musicians is that it gets them off the touring treadmill. After playing as many as 150 shows a year, Groovelily’s drummer Lewin recalled, “The first time we did our show in Philadelphia, I went in on the second day of rehearsal and all of our gear was still there. It was like a mirage. You mean my drums are here and we don’t have to set up anything?”

Stage work provides not just freedom from hassle, but a freedom to realize creative ambitions that may feel out of reach amid the grind of recording and going on the road. “A lot of artists have felt the fatigue that what used to work doesn’t work anymore,” said Alvarez. “We’re looking for, in a way, an escape hatch so we can be artists to the fullest degree that we’ve ever been able to. Also we’re getting involved in something that’s more sustainable and that’s more kind to our art, you know?”

That’s the thinking behind the Joe’s Pub commissioning program, said Thake. “With the collapse of the music industry, the idea of having a career as a musician is rapidly evaporating. So what are tools we can give artists? The live show is king. You have to have a good live show; if you don’t, you’re in real trouble. And even if you have a live show, you can’t have a life—you have to constantly be on the road.”

Settling down into a creative marriage doesn’t guarantee a nonstop honeymoon, of course. If there’s a short trip between writing and trying out material with a band, there are few shortcuts to polishing a work for the stage. The banjo-playing troubadour Abigail Washburn is learning that with *Post-American Girl*, a show about her travels to China, which recently premiered at Joe’s Pub. Though she had the help of director Meiyin Wang and Chinese Theatre Works, the playwriting ball was in her court.

“I’m used to being a storyteller in my songs, but not of a larger story,” Washburn confessed. “I’m even having trouble calling it a play—I’m not a playwright. I’ll call it a ‘stage piece.’”

Said Stew, “Music isn’t hard for us, but writing those plays is hard, and it’s time-consuming. Every playwright who’s reading this will know that, if you take the commission you get and divide it by the amount of time you take writing the play—we should be delivering pizza.”

And though Stew and Rodewald have had the support of producing theatres to develop their work in roughly the way bands jam through to a great set, that isn’t always an easy model to replicate. Kyle Jarrow, a theatre composer and bandleader best known for *A Very Merry Unauthorized Children’s Scientology Pageant* and *Hostage Song*, created a stage piece called *Raptured* with his band Sky-Pony last year, under the auspices of the New York-based Play Company. The workshop production went well, he said, but the next step was hard to figure out.

“The Play Company thought, ‘Why don’t we send you to one of the summer musical theatre workshops?’” recalled Jarrow, a wiry, casually intense icon of geek chic. “But it’s not feasible to bring eight people and all of their equipment to develop a show in a room. Theatre producers aren’t used to that kind of budget.”

That’s just the writing and rehearsal phase; there’s also the non-trivial question of the performance space itself. As Malloy put it, “Theatrical venues have all these trappings that are so bad for music—they’re the antithesis of the musical experience. The politeness, the seats, you can’t have drink or food in there, the quiet.” He cited another show in which he wrote and performed, *Banana Bag & Bodice’s Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage*, which toured Australia’s Adelaide Festival last month and will run at ART’s Club Oberon April 16–May 5. “I feel like our best *Beowulf* shows have been in rock clubs. That’s where this work should be happening; there just aren’t a lot of those venues.”

For *Natasha*, Malloy and director Rachel Chavkin transformed Ars Nova’s modular space into a supper club, and their goal for

the remount was to customize a venue where the show could run for a while. "There just isn't a theatre we could move into with that show, and there's no existing bar or nightclub, because they already have a different act in every night, that can host full runs."

Club Oberon isn't the only place in Boston where theatre and music are meeting in new ways. Jason Slavick's company *Liars & Believers* is all about blurring the lines between stage show and rock show. Last year he helped the band Walter Sickert & the Army of Broken Toys transform a concept album into a scripted show called *28 Seeds* at the Boston Center for the Arts. In May he'll produce *Icarus*, another hybrid piece, by local composer/performer Nathan Leigh. Though he's also an old-school straight theatre fan himself, Slavick is driven, he said, by the all-too-familiar search for young and engaged audiences.

"At most plays I go to, I'm the youngest person in the audience," noted Slavick. "But I go to rock shows, experimental art shows, performance art shows, and the audience is in their late teens and twenties. There's a kind of immediacy of experience with musicians and sound that speaks to that audience. This is a generation of people who say, 'I don't go to theatre,' but they'll go to a weird-ass fuckin' thing if there's a live band and it's \$15."

In Texas, Houston's Catastrophic Theatre has been cross-breeding its own musical mutants with some success. Artistic director Jason Nodler has thus far created two shows around the songs of outsider artist Daniel Johnston (*Speeding Motorcycle* and *Life Is Happy and Sad*), as well as the multi-layered *Bluefinger*, after the Black Francis concept album inspired by Dutch art-rocker Herman Brood. Said Nodler, who employs local bands and musicians as much or more than trained actors: "I love music more than I do theatre. The kind of work that interests me doesn't exist unless I do it."

The future of musical theatre may rest with artists who don't think of it as crossing over to play music in their shows, or to put some theatre in their music. PigPen Theatre Company, a troupe of seven Carnegie Mellon theatre grads, has created a homespun ensemble aesthetic involving folktales, funny accents, shadow puppetry—and rousing live acoustic

music that handily lives up to the inevitable Mumford & Sons comparisons. Like Young Jean Lee, they've released an album (*Bremen*) and are embarking on a tour of music venues, quite apart from their shows for theatre, which includes *The Old Man and the Old Moon*, that had an Off-Broadway run earlier this year and will sit down at Chicago's Writers' Theatre this coming fall.

"As we're hitting the road as a band, this record company guy we know asked us, 'In the future, do you see yourselves theatricalizing your concerts?'" said PigPen member Arya Shahi. "It's just so funny that both industries are trying to break into each other. We're getting asked the same questions on opposite ends: Do we think of ourselves as a theatre company that plays a lot of music in our shows, or do we think of ourselves as a band that has very theatricalized concerts?"

Thinking of bands as musical-devising ensembles may be one way that institutional theatres, some of whom have already taken the plunge in commissioning group-developed work, can get their heads (and their producing budgets) around this hybrid form. It's also a connection that effectively reboots a deep affinity, according to Stew.

"I pay theatre the highest compliment," said Stew. "As much as I worship music, I think music is theatre. I think any time you're doing it in front of somebody, it's theatre." He cites a moment in *The Total Bent* when, in the middle of a song, a character who hasn't played an instrument before walks over to a drum kit and kicks it into high gear. "It electrifies the house. It's like, 'Oh my God, this is actually happening!' You couldn't write that."

Has a good beat, though. You might dance to it.

A NATIONWIDE BOOM: THE NOT-FOR-PROFIT MUSICAL FACTORY

BY TERRY BERLINER

Resident theatres believe in the journey of musical-theatre artists, not in hits.

Allow me to let you in on a few things that you may or may not know. Many not-for-profit theatres across the country actually give birth to new musicals. Some develop and premiere new musicals. Others rework popular favorites that didn't quite reach potential the first time around. Some of these stand-alone productions are of such quality that producers wish they had the wherewithal to present them in other venues. Several theatres make it a practice to take on co-productions with simpatico organizations. Dwindling are the days when Broadway was the primary engine that drove the American musical. Today, from coast to coast, resident theatres are rich and fertile breeding grounds for good musicals—and I believe there's a clear-cut reason for that. It's because instead of searching for the moneymaker, most not-for-profits put their energy into developing long-standing relationships with artists and into creating welcoming homes where they can develop their work. Some go so far as to help ensure subsequent productions.

GOODSPEED MUSICALS

Sometimes the success of a new musical rests in how it resonates—how many people want to see it above and beyond its initial production. Is it remounted in other cities across the country? Is it sent out on tour? Is it licensed to schools and other organizations? Clearly one of the goals of Goodspeed Musicals artistic director Michael P. Price is longevity—the lifespan of a piece.

In finding, developing and looking for ways to prolong the life of new musicals, Price has played a significant role over his more than 35 years in the business. Since 1968, Goodspeed Musicals, headquartered in east Haddam, Conn., has developed 45 shows, including 25 premieres. He says of this history, "I've been at this game for a long time, and every day I'm learning something new."

This past September Goodspeed joined forces with North Shore Music Theatre, in Beverly, Mass., to re-assess and co-produce Ted Kocielek and James Racheff's musical *Abyssinia*, which began its life at Goodspeed in 1987. Both theatres had presented the show several years ago, and because of popular demand (and because it never made it into the catalog) they are exploring it again, doing significant rewrites with the original writing team. Similarly, *Amour*, by Michel Legrand, Didier van Cauwelaert and Jeremy Sams, the little jewel of a musical that had an all-too-brief 2002 run on Broadway (31 previews, 17 performances), had a Goodspeed berth this past fall.

"Our interest is to put it in the catalog that is licensed by Music Theatre International (MTI) or Tams-Witmark Music Library, Inc.," Price explains. "There's always the hope that it might get picked up by a producer from New York or the road or other regional theatres. We are very happy when our works go out to regional theatres. We have had 28 productions that have done so thus far."

Price has developed strong ties with directors, choreographers and writers of new musicals as well as with regional theatres and commercial producers. As a founding member of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre (NAMT) 20 years ago, he thoroughly believes in the necessity of forming liaisons—"before you produce the show in your own house you want to ensure that it has a continued life," he says. It's a process that "doesn't get easier the longer you do it," he concedes, "but we sort of do it naturally here."

It's in the Goodspeed's 200-seat Norma Terris Theatre that many of the company's new musicals are born. For initial runs in the Terris, no notices are allowed. Other projects—like the Sandy Wilson musical, *The Boy Friend*, directed by Julie Andrews, which subsequently went on a national tour—head straight to the 398-seat main stage. Price says he is very careful about exposing new work to critics

too early. "We need a protected environment to ensure that right out of the starting gate a piece is not going to get a death sentence," he says. "When you have *Variety* cover you, it's like having the *New York Times* cover you. If a *Variety* reviewer says, 'It's no good,' that can be the end of many years of work."

At the Goodspeed, creative development work happens year-round, with residencies for composers, authors and lyricists January-March. Students from the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Conn., are brought in to read the pieces aloud. A residency in conjunction with New York University's Tisch School of the Arts for musical-theatre writers is integrated into the curriculum for second-year graduate students, who spend a week at the Goodspeed working with the company's creative staff and professional actors.

"Every musical Goodspeed does is a 'new' musical," Price says. Recent work that the company has developed includes some titles that may be seen again soon, either in New York or the regions: *The Flight of the Lawnchair Man*, with book by Peter Ullian and music and lyrics by Robert Lindsey Nassif; and *The Girl in the Frame*, with book, music and lyrics by Jeremy Desmon. "Yes, you have to start with the givens," Price elaborates. "But we have new choreographers, directors, set designers and actors, so we need to fashion the material differently. We cannot do museum pieces. Museum pieces don't sell tickets, and they don't speak to a contemporary audience. If you want a museum piece, go to a museum. Don't go to the theatre."

NORTH SHORE MUSIC THEATRE

Like many nonprofit theatres interested in musicals, Massachusetts's North Shore Music Theatre puts its faith in the creative life of artists, not commercial products. "We believe very strongly that it's not just the musical itself that we are working on—it's much more the relationship with the creators, composer, lyricist and book writer," says North Shore's artistic director/executive producer Jon Kimbell. "We want to establish a relationship with people whom we believe have a voice in the development of the art form. Our goal is to have some kind of impact on American musical theatre."

With five new musicals in various stages of development (including Joe DiPietro's new version of *Damn Yankees* and *The Navigator*, a maritime

musical by Michael Wartofsky and Kathleen Cahill), North Shore is indeed making its mark. "We have found, having done this for so long now," says Kimbell, "that the most successful developmental process is done in conjunction with one or two other theatres, so that there is a kind of pipeline set up and the creative team has a journey that they can count on."

As a result, a show's production track record can seem, on paper at least, like a tangled web of financing credits. Two company-developed works, both composed by George Stiles, are good examples: Presented in the 2004 New York Musical Theatre Festival, *Tom Jones* was staged at North Shore in 2004 in association with co-producers and co-authors Daniel O. Brambilla of the Hummingbird Centre in Toronto and Vera Guerin of California's Stage-by-Stage Incorporated; meanwhile, *The Three Musketeers* (a co-production with Chicago Shakespeare Theater, in conjunction with commercial producer Greg Shaffert at 321 Productions) has found berths both in Chicago and Beverly, Mass., for the 2006-07 season.

"One of the problems with developing new works," explains Kimbell, "is that once it's done at the initial theatre, getting that second or third production is always an issue. If we can line that up as we're developing it, that's the best situation. It gives the creative team and producers time to look at a piece in different situations with different audiences and different productions."

Memphis, by Joe DiPietro and David Bryan, presented in 2004 at TheatreWorks, in Palo Alto, Calif., provides a perfect example of the pipeline that Kimbell is talking about. A fictionalized version of the life of Memphis DJ Dewey Phillips, the first DJ to air Elvis's music on the radio, *Memphis* chronicles the dynamics of radio stations playing what was then referred to as "race music" in the south. North Shore first presented it, then it went to Palo Alto, and it is hoped that the show will receive a new production in the future after further rewrites and development.

"In my mind, new musicals are like children—they are all different," Kimbell says. "Yes, each one has two arms and two legs and a head, but they all have different personalities, different needs."

To that end, says associate producer John La Rock, North Shore's job is to "identify the right director, choreographer, music director,

orchestrator, designers, actors, casting directors, public licensing people and fundraisers. Once that's established, our responsibilities move into two areas. The first is producing the show at whatever level it's headed toward—whether it be mainstage, festival, table reading or a commission process that has no performance goal at the time. Our second responsibility is to find other theatres, producers or people who have the mechanisms in place and who say, 'I share your vision of this piece and I will do it after you, or I will do it before you, or instead of you.'

The trick is to teach musical-theatre artists to see beyond the first production. However, Kimbell cautions, determining the commercial viability of a piece is not North Shore's expertise. "That is for the commercial producer to ascertain," he says. "When a piece does go forward, we usually retain some kind of credit in terms of the billing and marketing, and a small piece of the author's gross."

To find new work and writers, Kimbell and La Rock attend readings, presentations, festivals and workshops across the country. Once they have found a new project that interests them, they estimate it takes an average of six years to develop a new piece. Says Kimbell: "There's no crystal ball. But one thing is for certain—there is huge interest in developing musical theatre."

THEATREWORKS, PALO ALTO

How does a little theatre 2,500 miles away from New York City establish itself as a viable venue in which to develop new musicals? One way is to play host to some of the most talented up-and-coming artists in the field. TheatreWorks is putting its stock in the makers of new musicals. Emerging artists like Beth Blatt, Nell Benjamin, David Bryan, Kirsten Childs, Joe DiPietro, David Ford and Jenny Giering go to Palo Alto to develop work. Over the past couple of years Daniel Goldfarb, Aaron Jafferis, Tom Jones, Lynne Kauffman, David Kirshenbaum, Gihieh Lee, Andrew Lippa, Marsha Norman, Laurence O'Keefe, Billy Philadelphia, Scott Schwartz, Tanya Shaffer, Joseph Thalken and Chay Yew have also found a creative home in Palo Alto.

The result is that TheatreWorks has become a sort of factory for promising new projects. Its venue includes a black-box theatre, the 450-seat Lucie Stern Theatre and the 600-seat Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, so depending on where a project is in its stage of development,

it may end up in one of these spaces (or in a rehearsal studio), either open to the public or in a safe space behind closed doors.

Says the company's director of new works, Kent Nicholson: "The most important thing is that we feel the creative team is filled with TheatreWorks artists. Do we believe these artists will create a piece someday—even if this one isn't it—that we will want to produce? We aren't looking to develop product per se, but to develop artists. The product is a natural outgrowth of that sensibility."

Because the Bay Area boasts culturally diverse audiences, "multicultural stories are very appealing," Nicholson adds. "We also look for pieces that celebrate the human spirit. We are looking for a spark in the book or score that raises it above the ordinary. *Striking 12*—the Hans Christian Andersen-inspired musical written and performed by folk-rock group GrooveLily with Rachel Sheinkin (of the hit show *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*)—is a perfect example of this. It's a quirky rock concert/musical comedy which can't be easily categorized. We first presented it in our developmental festival and then after some re-tooling, in our mainstage season. It's become one of our biggest hits ever."

In addition to a festival of readings and workshops, TheatreWorks also offers a yearly writers' retreat in which the company brings composer/writer teams to Palo Alto to work uninterrupted for a period of time. Sometimes, the size of a new project may not be right for TheatreWorks, but Nicholson gives it the developmental green light anyway. "We invited Andrew Lippa and David Lindsay-Abaire to our writers' retreat to work on *Betty Boop*, a piece that is too big for us, but Andrew and David needed a place to begin work," he allows. "Andrew is family. Last season we produced his *A Little Princess*, so we were more than happy to provide a space for them to work. In the end, this all works to everyone's advantage. Each piece has its own trajectory. The important thing is not to force it into a process that does more harm than good. We want writers to think of us as an artistic home, regardless of what project they are working on."

LINCOLN CENTER THEATER

Ira Weitzman, Lincoln Center Theater's musical-theatre associate producer, continues to play a very active role in the nurturing and creative producing of new musicals. I first met Weitzman

when I was assistant directing Jeanine Tesori and Brian Crawley's *Violet*—that's when Weitzman was based on 42nd Street at Playwrights Horizons, and it was still a pretty sketchy walk from Broadway to 10th Avenue.

If you ever have the opportunity to work on a new musical with Weitzman, consider yourself lucky. This advocate of the musical theatre has, as he himself says, "always wanted to work on at least one new musical a year."

Last season at Lincoln Center Theater he produced four: *The Frogs*, *Dessa Rose*, *Belle Epoque* and *The Light in the Piazza*. This past fall and winter he was at work on the musical adaptation of Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, written by Michael John LaChiusa and directed by Graciela Daniele. This show has a cast of 10 women, with Phylicia Rashad in the lead. It opened in the Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater this past February.

The important thing to note about *Bernarda Alba* is that (as is usually the case) Weitzman has worked with these artists before. "Graciela and Michael John have collaborated three times with us, on *Hello Again*, *Marie Christine* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*," he says. "Michael John had always wanted to adapt the Lorca play. After he came in to read and sing through the piece for us, Lincoln Center committed to producing it right away. It was too beautiful to pass up. But we had to wait to put it into development because we had so much activity. We were finally able to do a four-week, in-house workshop during the summer of 2005."

Calling himself a "creative producer," Weitzman defines his job "as someone who deals with the day-to-day artistic running and creation of the musical. I don't write, direct or act, but I'm interested in all of these things. Sometimes there's matchmaking involved. I'll seek out the idea, and the personnel. More often than not, the writing collaborations are already there and I will facilitate the addition of designers, choreographers, directors."

Fifty percent of his job is shepherding a group of artists so that they will be moving in the same direction. The ability to do this effectively requires an intimate understanding of the group's dynamics. How does he get a read on the group? "By sitting in the back of the room knitting," Weitzman replies.

"I'm not an intrusive producer. I am a facilitator. The rehearsal room is a sacred place. And I would do anything to protect the sacredness of the room. When I'm sitting in the back of a room, knitting, I can see the dynamics of how people work with each other—where they might get stuck or where they might need a little push, or encouragement, or a pointed question or two."

He also functions as a liaison between the artistic group and the Lincoln Center staff. One thing he is proud of is creating a smooth operating atmosphere. "The making of new musicals is always fraught and fragile, but it doesn't have to be a miserable experience," Weitzman avows. "Conflict, disagreement and discourse are good, and all those things are important parts of the creative process. But getting work realized, or communicating with other people, can often be facilitated by a good producer. When left out to sea, some people can free-float away from the center. Often there's not somebody to pull it back. That's my job."

His favorite quote about his role in the institutional theatre comes from André Bishop during their Playwrights Horizons days: "Opportunities create artists." Neither Weitzman nor Bishop are directors; it's not part of their agenda, therefore, to find work for themselves to direct. "This allows us to give many more opportunities to many more people," Weitzman says. "Our agenda is really about the artists fulfilling their own vision and our supporting that vision."

Like many producers in the nonprofit theatre, Weitzman is a lot more sanguine than your typical commercial producer about a show's economic potential. "I don't always believe that a show has to be a huge hit the moment it comes out," he says. "Sometimes it's not meant to be that way. Sometimes you're a little ahead of your time, or you're a little out of sync with the trends, or you're doing something that may be difficult for people to deal with the first time around. I try to think of things both in the short term—What do we have to do today to move this project forward?—And in the long term: We're putting all this new work out there to fertilize the soil. It's just like tending a garden. My garden is the musical theatre."

JUJAMCYN THEATERS

Jujamcyn Theaters's spring entrant to the Broadway season, *The Wedding Singer*, started its life at Seattle's 5th Avenue Theatre this past winter. When *Hairspray* producer Margo Lion started developing the project with New Line Cinema, Jujamcyn came on board, bringing in John Rando as director and Rob Ashford as choreographer. Lion, Jujamcyn and New Line are following the model set by *Hairspray*. Do several readings until everyone feels that the show is, as Jujamcyn's creative director Jack Viertel puts it, "well enough in hand that we can do the out-of-town production."

Viertel's ideal approach to creative producing is to start from scratch. Having served this year as a juror on the New York Musical Theatre Festival (NYMF) committee, where he read six new musicals, Viertel admits that he has never produced a show that was submitted in its completed form. A more likely beginning would be an outline that Viertel would himself create to see if a particular story feels like it has a musical structure. Writers would then be chosen, and the outline would serve as a starting point for discussion. Once a draft of a musical project has been written, Viertel says, the next steps are crucial: "We move into readings and rewrites. When you hear a show read for the first time, you have an automatic sense of—this is halfway there; or it's nowhere; or it's amazingly close to being finished. In my experience, if the basic elements are not visible the first time out, the final show generally doesn't succeed. You have to have character, story, style, point-of-view.

"The only exception that I can think of is Jelly's Last Jam—that initially was truly a mess," Viertel backtracks, then gives some other examples. "Actually," he says, "*The Secret Garden* and *Smokey Joe's Cafe* had problems too. It's good that there are exceptions, in that it gives you hope. By and large, the elements underlying why a show succeeds or fails are what they are; if the liabilities are very basic, they don't tend to be erased by repeated developmental processes."

Smokey Joe's, among Jujamcyn's biggest successes, Viertel elaborates, "had as bad a first workshop as you could ask for. But as [Jujamcyn president Rocco Landesman] said, 'even when it was bad, it was good.' It just refused to not work! You couldn't get out of its way. There are other shows—they should probably remain nameless-

that weren't good in their first workshops, and then when carried all the way to fruition never escaped their fate."

Viertel, who has been in the producing business for more than 18 years and also serves as artistic director of the New York City Center *Encores!* series, has somehow in his spare time managed to write the book for his own musical, *Time and Again* (music by Walter Edgar Kennon). Having had one foot in both camps taught him a few things. "One of the fruits of experience is that you learn a bit about how to stay out of trouble," he says. "It's when you have something that should really stop that the hard decisions have to be made. You keep hoping, but, as Hal Prince famously said, 'The show need not necessarily go on.'"

If, however, you do choose to go on, it's imperative to pay attention to "what the show needs," Viertel says. In the case of *Time and Again*, which was produced first at San Diego's Old Globe and then at Manhattan Theatre Club, Viertel said that he should have asked for a big-budget production: "It's a mistake to not have a full Broadway production if that is what a show needs to communicate what it is." But *Time and Again*, he says, ended up being "a big scenery musical that we did without any scenery. It had a rich orchestral sound, but we did it with two pianos. The bare-bones material—which might never have worked anyway; who knows about these things?—Wasn't allowed to do what it might have done. The funny thing about musicals that has nothing at all to do with plays is: Sometimes it's the four big chords played by the orchestra at the end of the number that make that number a show-stopper. You could have everything else right, but the actual theatrical moment doesn't exist until it's all dressed up."

Hairspray, on the other hand, succeeded because it was a broad satire of the "cheesy glitter and glamour" that was central to its story, Viertel says. "The content dictated the development approach. Could we have delivered the style of what that content demanded in the context of a resident theatre like Steppenwolf Theatre Company, or did we need a Broadway-style out-of-town playhouse and a big Broadway budget to make it work?" The answer is self-evident. *The Wedding Singer* is another case in which it has been clearly necessary to pull out the big guns. Jujamcyn is in the business of creating musicals that have mass

appeal—"pieces that a million people will want to come see," Viertel declares. "I would have loved to have been involved in shows like *The Light in the Piazza*, but I don't think a million people are going to want to come and see that. Lincoln Center Theater exists so that those pieces have an appropriate venue in which to play."

And what does it mean to appeal to the masses? "What we're looking for is not necessarily slam-bang comedy," Viertel acknowledges. "Commercial is not necessarily what's shallowest and least rewarding. I'm always looking for pieces that are accessible and that have emotional content. The fact that they are in musical form has to be justified—there has to be some larger emotional life, or expansive subject matter, that wouldn't be as well expressed in a straight drama. Musicals have to have a certain size and stature."

Going back to his roots as a dramaturg, Viertel stresses the importance of a driven central character. "What I'm always absolutely demanding of is a central character who has a big problem, a big desire, and who drives the action," he says. "If the story isn't about somebody who is going to fight a great battle, where the audience will want to stick around and find out how it comes out, you're almost licked before you start. There are a lot of movies about heroes who are acted upon. But there are almost no musicals about heroes who are acted upon."

In *Hairspray*, Tracy Turnblad is a fat girl who wants to dance on television. "She has an apparently unrealizable dream," he goes on. "It's sort of a stupid dream, but not to her. She's absolutely passionate about dancing on the Corny Collins Show. Then it turns out that that's not enough for her—she has to change history. She has to integrate television. It's all done in a light manner, but the character's passion is not light. She wants it more than anything else in the world. She's willing to sacrifice everything to get it. That's why the show works."

Moreover, Viertel believes, musicals are best when they deal with "American stories" that offer a "larger-than-life look at what human beings are striving for." He explains: "It doesn't mean you can't have a wonderful Parisian or Afghan musical. But give me *Caroline, Or Change*, or *Show Boat*. I'm not at all afraid of doing serious work. But I am leery of doing works on obscure subjects. If you want to write a Broadway musical—if you're aiming to work

with me, as opposed to Ira Weitzman at Lincoln Center—you have to write an accessible score. Traditional musical-theatre writing with melodies that you can actually identify, that communicate fairly simply to the ear, are what has fueled this business from the beginning. There's a rough-and-tumble on Broadway. It's a matter of life or death. If the show is a flop, you have to kill yourself. If the show is a hit, you're the biggest genius who has ever lived."

DODGER THEATRICALS

For more than 20 years, the Dodgers have worked with other commercial producers and regional theatres in the development of new musicals. The company's hit musical *Jersey Boys* is one example of a relatively easy road from the regions into New York. *A Little Princess*, another musical with great potential, is a very different example—its trajectory has been not quite so simple. *Jersey Boys* opened on Broadway last fall after developmental work at California's La Jolla Playhouse. The Dodgers put it on a fast track, moving it quickly in about 20 months. "The authors, Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice, came to us with the piece," recalls the Dodgers producer Edward Strong. "We thought that [La Jolla artistic director and Dodgers co-founder] Des McAnuff would be a great captain of the ship. The chemistry was right. Its first public outing in La Jolla was invaluable for the authors. They knew it worked, but they also knew they could make it better. That's the perfect place for authors to be at after a regional production. Marshall and Rick fine-tuned a few things before the Broadway opening."

I first met Strong about four years ago when director Susan H. Schulman asked me to work with her on the new Brian Crawley/Andrew Lippa musical *A Little Princess*. After a series of readings and presentations in New York, this musical was produced at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, Calif., with enhancement monies contributed by the Dodgers. In a perfect world, a commercial transfer should have happened right away. But unlike *Jersey Boys*, *A Little Princess* did not move forward; it was recently presented in the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's 2005 series to see if the festival approach might generate exposure for the piece and new interest in its commercial possibilities. Enhancement money is key to the Dodgers approach. "I'm feeling very old," says Strong, "because I can still remember the first time Jujamcyn's Rocco Landesman used the word 'enhancement,' talking about giving money to La

Jolla Playhouse for *Big River*—somewhere around \$75,000 in addition to what they had budgeted for it. The enhancement monies were to cover additional costs of sets, lighting, and so on.”

Commercial producers allow shows to happen in regional theatres through a license agreement. “The commercial producer holds the rights with the authors, but we then license our rights to, say, La Jolla Playhouse,” Strong explains. “The license agreement will stipulate that the regional production may not have national reviews without our permission, thus allowing only for reviews in the local papers. This was a tremendous bone of contention in the cases of *Big River* and *The Who’s Tommy*, because the local theatre would actually benefit if *Time magazine* came to cover the shows. It’s good for them, but it may not necessarily be good for the show.

“In those days,” strong continues, “there was a real question about whether or not a not-for-profit regional theatre would be violating its charitable-tax mandate by participating with a commercial producer. There used to be a strong divide between the not-for-profits and the commercial world. All those distinctions have blurred since the time of *Big River*, which actually began at American Repertory Theatre in early 1984 and then went on to La Jolla that summer before moving to Broadway.”

Strong mentions another possibility that does not involve a Broadway transfer. “Another situation is when a regional production might be good enough for a licensing house to buy the rights for the new show, and then those rights could be sold to various constituent stock and amateur theatres that would want to do their own productions.”

Although a New York imprimatur obviously lends a show credibility, there is a whole other world beyond Broadway. Shows that don’t turn a profit in New York have the potential to redeem their losses from licensed tours, regional, stock, community theatre and high school productions. As strong points out, “*Footloose*, which was vilified on Broadway, has made a ton of money from that second world.”

Strong sees his role as a producer first as the “one who tries to guide, shape and influence the artistic outcome,” and second as a constant cheerleader who shares his enthusiasm with the “commercial fan base” and “creates momentum to raise the full capitalization.” Back in the ‘80s, *Big River* cost \$2.5 million to capitalize; he estimates that *A Little Princess* will cost almost \$10 million. “Anybody can

say they’re going to do a musical,” Strong reasons, “but unless you can put together the capital, you’re going to spend a lot of time in development hell.”

There are in fact only a handful of regional theatres that have the financial, capital or human resources to do new musicals, Strong notes, citing art, La Jolla and San Francisco’s American Conservatory Theater as examples of nonprofit theatres that the Dodgers have collaborated with. “There are many assets that regional theatres have that are otherwise hard to pull together for those tentative first steps of a new musical,” he adds, with the caveat that the Dodgers see a regional production as a “stand-alone.”

“We’re not putting that production in trucks and bringing it to Broadway. Working with a regional theatre is a distinctly different process from the out-of-town tryout, where a show is mounted with the intention of bringing it right in. We would rather raise the capital to give the enhancement to the regional theatre—to get our support team out there and to see a production and then decide the next step.” The advent of the Internet, however, has adversely affected the safe distance required for a new show to develop without being under microscopic scrutiny. “The first night you do something, the Internet talkers are there, and the web is bustling the next day,” Strong laments. “For whatever reason, the tilt is generally more negative than constructive. In the old days, these shows would go out of town to escape criticism too early in the process—there was an informal protocol that protected a new work. Only the audience in the theatre that night would be witness to the trial of a new scene or rewritten song. Now we’re too naked all of the time.”

DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS

Disney Theatrical Productions is readying two new shows for Broadway in 2006: *Tarzan* and *Mary Poppins*. Says president Thomas Schumacher, “With *Tarzan*, we went to Bob Crowley and explored many different contexts for the show including, ‘What if we put up our own theatrical structure, and made a large-scale event out of it?’ But the more we got into the piece, the more we discovered its inherent strengths. It became a much more intimate idea.” While playwright David Henry Hwang worked on the book and Phil Collins worked on the music, Crowley—who is both designing and directing—worked with choreographer Meryl Tankard and aerial designer Pichon Baldinu to create the physical world of *Tarzan*.

"Pichon is based in Argentina," Schumacher says. "In the spring of 2005 he set up a laboratory in an old abandoned theatre in La Boca, Buenos Aires. We spent six weeks there, working out what major moments of the show might look like. It was impossible to create the show until we had a physical vocabulary in place." Another aerial laboratory was conducted in Purchase, N.Y., that summer to continue the exploration.

Disney musicals are mythological in proportion and rely on a great deal of fantasy, so Schumacher prefers a development process that simultaneously addresses both the dramaturgical aspects of the show and the story's physical world. "We spend money up front on development—that is the luxury that we have," he says. "That money is part of the capitalization of the show, because of the nature of the kind of material we migrate to." Development takes as long as it needs to take. The *Mary Poppins* project, for instance, dates back to the early 1990s, when Disney chief Michael Eisner expressed intent in turning the film into a musical. London producer Cameron Mackintosh, who owned the stage rights of the original novel by the late Pamela Travers, was seeking permission to use such songs from the movie as "Step in Time," "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" and "A Spoonful of Sugar." He also hired George Stiles and Anthony Drewe to write new songs. Schumacher recalls: "Disney said to Cameron, 'Let us acquire your stage rights for a sum of money and an ongoing participation, and we'll produce this.' That was, of course, unacceptable to him. Simultaneously he said to us, 'Why don't you give me all of your film material, for which we will compensate you, and I will go make the show.' That was unacceptable to us. We were at an extraordinary impasse. The show was not going to happen."

In December of 2001, Schumacher flew to London to meet Mackintosh. "I said to Cameron, 'We tried to do this without you. You tried to do this without us. But what no one has ever talked about is what the show would actually be. Before we abandon this idea completely, I thought we could talk for about an hour about what you think the show is.' Over the next hour he shared with me all of his ideas, including the songs that George and Anthony had written. We both said that day, 'Wouldn't it be great if someone who can deal with magical realism on stage could design the set—like Bob Crowley?' Our ideas meshed immediately. We began the

process of bringing in Richard Eyre to direct and Julian Fellowes to write the book. And we were both fans of choreographer Matthew Bourne." As a producer, Schumacher doesn't hesitate to put forward his own ideas about a show. "my role is to be a catalyst. It's not my job to design, direct or write the show. But it is my job to react to, respond to, and encourage those artists. It's my job to say if they're not achieving their goals—in which case, we re-conceive, or we make other choices."

When he and Peter Schneider created a theatrical division for Disney in order to produce *Beauty and the Beast*, they followed the nonprofit infrastructure model, which is where both men cut their teeth. "Disney Theatricals is set up like a regional theatre," Schumacher says. "We have our own internal marketing, technical director, business affairs and literary department." In the years since, dozens of Disney projects have been proposed, but many have never gone beyond the development stage—for example, stage versions of *Dead Poets Society* and *Tin Men*, a piece about the Harlem Globetrotters called *Hoopz*, and an adult *Winnie-the-Pooh* story. *Mary Poppins*, which did pass muster, was first done in London, and *Tarzan* is about to open on Broadway. Also in the works, with no date set at this time, is *The Little Mermaid*. "The *Lion King* developed very quickly, I think, out of sheer naïveté," says Schumacher. "None of us had done it before. When you're on the ground floor you don't have very far to fall if you make a mistake. The more successful you are, the greater the risk you perceive."

With 16 productions worldwide that have the exclusive Disney stamp, Schumacher has been exploring other models. The marquee for *Mary Poppins* reads "Disney and Cameron Mackintosh present." Disney has the option to be credited as a producer for other projects—like Peter Schneider's staging of the Disney property *Sister Act*, and a yet-to-be-announced Julie Taymor project. Schumacher concludes: "The artist-producer is responsible for driving that car. I fund the development. You see, there are no rules except working with wonderful artists. Years ago I asked Tim Rice, 'Can we make a musical with this story of these lions in the savannah?' He said, 'Tom, I made a musical out of the obscure wife of a dead Latin American dictator.' Nobody would have said *Evita* was a good idea. If it works, it's a good idea. It's no crime to produce work for a mass audience."

Terry Berliner is a freelance director based in New York City.

THE SONG'S THE THING: CREATING A ROCK + THEATER COLLABORATION

My sister and I are sitting in the Metreon movie complex in downtown San Francisco and the lights have just lowered to start the latest Bond movie, *Skyfall*. I'm there for, let's be honest, Daniel Craig. And Judi Dench. Mainly Daniel Craig. But what smashes into us first is the incredible theme song by Adele. The movie was great (Bardem! Evil!), but what I left with was that song. I carry that song in my pocket, I play it in the shower, I try to sing it in said shower. That song is the movie, and the movie is that song. I thought, "Theater should have that."

Something of a show that you could take home with you. A way to describe a show that isn't with words. A way of sharing a show without traditional marketing. A way to experience a piece of a show anywhere in the world. I had a premiere coming in about a year at the visionary and agile theater company Shotgun Players in Berkeley, California. It's a tricky, emotional, mind-bending little play, called *By And By*, about love and loss and tipping over the edge of human biotechnology. Someone could make a rock anthem out of that, right?

So I asked my brilliant director, Mina Morita, if I could commission a theme song from the coolest band I knew in the Bay Area, Kate Kilbane and Dan Moses of The Kilbanes. I'd take care of the logistics, if I could get the go-ahead from Shotgun. It was worth the experiment. Mina was immediately game for this idea. So was Patrick Dooley, the Artistic Director of Shotgun. Shotgun produced the Tom Waits musical *Waycek* last year, and has a history with muscular and innovative storytelling. The whole team was game, and introductions were made. Kate Kilbane is not only a riveting musician and singer, but she's also a theater nerd like the rest of us (a degree in performance studies from NYU will do that). She got the play's story and the concept of a "theater theme song" right away. Kate and Dan Moses, her co-writer and husband, got to work dreaming up a song for the show. They came to an early read through of *By And By* as well as design meetings, they talked with the sound designer Colin Trevor and Mina about the soundscape of the show. They were a part of the process from the beginning.

"Working with composers is usually a very cut and dry process," Colin Trevor says, "Generally the composer is responsible for setting the overall mood and tone of the music for a production, while the sound designer is responsible for implementing that music technically. But on *By And By*, however, we experienced a much more organic and collaborative process. We were able to get an early handle on the genre, style, and tone of music which we felt most powerfully reflected the content of the script, which we then shared with our composers to use as inspiration for what eventually became the song they wrote."

Soon The Kilbanes shot us two rough song ideas. We all landed on "Awake," a driving, building anthem that soars and smashes us into silence. Which is also the feeling with which we wanted to leave our audiences too—hard hope and a journey ahead that starts right now. I have no idea how they did it, but it's perfect. Kate says, "There are countless ways that you can tell a story. But what this idea offered us was the chance to tell one story, in two different ways at the same time. One, fully explored in the play; and the other encapsulated and condensed into a three and a half minute rock tune in the song."

The whole process was invented as we went. The contractual agreements protecting The Kilbanes' work, but forever linking it to the play (not just the production, but the play itself as it continues its life). We were also inventing a kind of song-by-song investment in rock and roll, and exploring how our separate art forms inform each other.

Dan of The Kilbanes says, "We would focus on moments in the story, and try to wrap the music around that moment."

As Kate and Dan went about recording the song with The Bengsons, preproduction was in full swing. Kate and Dan brought the finished song to the cast and designers at an early read through, and played it for the major donors at the first rehearsal event.

Director Mina says, "Their music found a way directly into the heart of the story, and inspired our soundscape." The team chose to use "Awake" at a very important point in staging the last scene of the play, right after the climactic visual and emotional revelation of the show.

"'Awake' acts as a bridge to take us out of the world of the play and back into our thoughts and feelings about what we have just seen," sound designer Colin Trevor says. This new music-theater collaboration let us try to:

Create an original theme song for a play

Build new audiences and interest in this premiere production of *By And By* at Shotgun

Explore a new kind of artistic collaboration and conversation in our community across disciplines

Get rock fans to the theater, and theater fans to support new music

Have audiences say, "what was that awesome song?" and be able to download that awesome song in the lobby right after the show

Leave a longer, tangible artistic mark than theater often gets to do

Give audiences a souvenir of sorts of the play

Do something new in Bay Area theater

Try a new model to extend the life of the production
See if we could get away with it

"I was fascinated by this opportunity as a writer," Kate says, "to create the song that is the play, or the play told through a song. And I was incredibly inspired by the desire for the audience to take this story with them out of the theater and into the world."

The Kilbanes' rock opera Weightless is in development at Z Space in San Francisco.

BOUND BY BROADWAY: THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN MUSICAL

BY RYAN BOGNER

It is no secret that Broadway is the driving engine behind the development of new musical theater, largely because it's one of the only ways a musical can be profitable. When musicals succeed on Broadway, an entire channel of distribution opportunities open up, from tours to licensed productions at regional theaters that have trained their audiences to expect a Broadway brand. The American musical had its origins as popular entertainment, coming from vaudeville and operetta, and while it has always been primarily a for-profit business, it was an essential part of the cultural landscape. Over the past few decades, however, the market reach of musicals has been reduced to a very specific niche market while the artistic ambitions of the artists that create it have continued to grow and evolve. The art form is driven by commercial success, but opportunities for that success have condensed as well, as even commercial Off-Broadway has become the realm of musicals that have achieved a Broadway brand first.

The result of this condensation of the available marketplace is that new musicals are increasingly being evaluated according to a Broadway paradigm. That is, will the musical appeal to a Broadway audience and have a chance at becoming profitable? The question of "Is this musical commercial?" that gets bandied about frequently amongst the producers of new musical theater, is in actuality, "Is this musical a Broadway show?" The prescience of that question in the annals of development of new work invariably limits the form by forcing that work into the specific and singular environment of Broadway theater.

Producing on Broadway doesn't allow for a variance of options. The available theaters are mostly old, landmarked, and proscenium spaces located in a twenty-block section of one city. The costs are exorbitant and so are the ticket prices, resulting in an audience made up of mostly white, well-off individuals from the suburbs and tourists on vacation. Even with these limitations, it remains

one of the few launching pads for new musical theater with a profitable upside, and as long as it remains the sole viable distribution point for new musicals, the art form's evolution will be severely curtailed.

The community of readers here at HowlRound will recognize some of these same issues in the development of new plays, but for all of the talk throughout the theatrical community of the plight of the playwright, the reality is that while there are income and livelihood issues of great importance that need to be addressed with playwrights, the fact remains that there are plenty of institutions throughout the U.S. that are dedicated to the development of new American plays and frequently produce them. These writers may not be able to make a living off their plays, but there is at least a chance they will have them done. There are currently no major non-profit producing theaters in this country whose core or sole mission is the development and production of new musicals. Though major regional theaters will occasionally mount brand new musicals in their seasons, when they take one on it is often a project that has been incepted or optioned by a commercial Broadway producer who has made a substantial enhancement to the theater's budget. There's nothing inherently negative about this arrangement. Often, it is an effective development tool for these producers. But it feeds the notion that the granting of artistic life to a new work of musical theater is solely tied into its viability as a Broadway property.

So what do the writers of musicals do with their ideas that don't get traction commercially, aren't perceived as commercially viable or simply aren't right for the types of spaces available on Broadway? There are service organizations like the National Alliance for Musical Theater and the BMI Workshop, and various festivals that provide matchmaking, nurturing, and early stage opportunities to writers, but where does the next generation of musical theater composers, lyricists,

and bookwriters go to grow? Where do they go to dream, experiment, and perhaps even be allowed to fail? What are the intermediate steps for them? We have a crop of very talented and promising musical theater artists coming up through the ranks who have never had a fully realized professional production of their work. Through their frustration, they begin to write shows that are scalable and that can work effectively in a festival environment, or even worse, they learn to write for the music stand. They aren't getting the opportunities to see their work done theatrically with a professional team or paying audiences...experiences that are invaluable and essential to their artistic and creative growth.

The Broadway producing community should find this issue worrisome, as it won't be long before it begins to impact their product pipeline. No matter how corporate or commercial the ideas for new musicals become, there will still be a need for competent writers who understand the form and can translate these ideas into something theatrical. While the Broadway business model itself isn't necessarily flawed (when it works it works big and because of the incredible pay-off potential it's not likely to dramatically change soon), the fact remains, there are few, if any, other options currently available. Here's why it's incredibly problematic if the sole tastemakers of musical theater are Broadway producers: the very nature of producing commercially on Broadway disallows for the sharing of ideas and concepts and more global discussions of what the art form could be or should be evolving towards. These producers have a fiscal responsibility to their investors and are often very project-by-project focused.

The complexity of mounting a show on Broadway makes it nearly impossible to be concerned with the uber issues of the art while they are in the thick of it. The perspective these producers could provide in an aesthetic discussion of musical theater would be invaluable, but these discussions rarely happen amongst the commercial producing community, as there are no strong counterbalances to their perspective. Differing perspectives that might provide this balance are hard to come by in official or credible channels, as the criticism and academic discussions of musical theater as an art form are considerably limited. Many of the books written about musicals are from a historical or popular culture point of view, dealing more with the personalities of the players or the business

successes or failures of certain productions as opposed to a dramaturgical assessment of creative and artistic success or effectiveness. These works frequently are loaded with nostalgia for the "golden age" of musical theater and often lament the progress and changes made to the form such as the influx and incorporation of more modern musical stylings and narrative structures.

In addition, there are few educational institutions with programs that encourage the artistic exploration of the form at the graduate level that are not performance-based. In fact, because musical theater exists primarily in the commercial mode, the form is looked down upon by many theater makers and is considered to be more akin to the latest big-budget Hollywood romantic comedy than a worthy form of artistic expression. This might be partially attributed to the fact that the form is relatively young and has yet to reach a highbrow status (if you start counting at Oklahoma, book musicals as we know them have only existed for seventy years). But I believe that musical theater has matured to a point where it will be difficult to grow any further until it begins to be treated with the same reverence and aesthetic scrutiny that we place upon plays. There are artists out there who are passionate about the form with varying ideas, who want to create work that is envelope-pushing, different, and meaningful, but who need institutions that want to nurture new voices in musical theater.

In order for the full potential of the American musical to be reached, we will need institutions that will give these artists the chance to grow in an environment free from the pressures of commercial Broadway entertainment and expectations of financial success, allowing us to better differentiate between musicals that are purely populist and musicals that have aesthetic significance. Though popularity and the essentialness of a work of art may be linked, they are certainly not dependent upon one another. In fact works of art that are progressive and unfamiliar may not be fully understood by the public at the time their creation. It is the reason that major not-profit cultural institutions exist: to provide the artist with a space to showcase their work that is not entirely dependent upon the forces of capitalism and the malleable nature of public opinion moving favorably in their direction. So must it be with musical theater if it is ever to mature and take its place among the great art forms.

Mass appeal, or a perceived potential for it, cannot be the only reason a piece of musical theater is brought into the world. All of this is not to say that the Broadway model is counter to the creation of great works of art. Indeed, Broadway is one of our country's most cherished and important cultural landmarks. However, as costs continue to skyrocket it becomes increasingly difficult for it to be a place where this kind of progressive artistic success happens with any consistency or regularity. Broadway can and should continue to exist as the ultimate goal and top-level distribution point for works that are called to reach a wide audience. But there must be opportunities for musical theater to thrive and exist outside the Broadway sphere. Our definitions of success must be broadened so that we can feed both the future of the form and Broadway itself.

<http://howlround.com/bound-by-broadway-the-state-of-the-american-musical>

SONGWRITERS

GARRISON STARR

"BIG ENOUGH", "HEART COLLECTOR"

Words and Music by Garrison Starr

"GASOLINE"

Written by Garrison Starr and Curt Schneider

To say that Garrison Starr knows her way around the industry would be an understatement. Hailing from Hernando, MS, she released her major label debut, *18 Over Me*, in 1997 for Geffen and the rest is history. Her career has taken her from rooms of 12 people (at which she received a standing ovation) to touring with her idols in amphitheaters and back again. But she's not just a road dog. Starr is a writer and performer with a knack for "marrying pop smarts and Americana grit with a voice of remarkable power and clarity" (gomemphis.com 2012).

For her seventh full length, *Amateur*, Garrison decided to do something different. She threw the idea of labels out the window and released this record on her own. Her follow up to 2010's live effort *ReLive* was completely fan funded via PledgeMusic.com and contains some of Starr's most intimate songs to date. Spanning 13 tracks and co-writers such as Kevin Devine and Mary Chapin Carpenter, Garrison delves into her personal life to take the listener on a journey of heartbreak, self discovery, and her own vision of perseverance. While Starr is anything but an *Amateur*, her current effort puts everything in a new perspective for her, including getting her fans involved.



Photo by Heather Holty Newton

"I was really nervous doing this, putting my art directly in the hands of my fans. But they really came through and it was such an amazing experience. I'm so glad that I can share this experience with my fans and without anyone acting as a go-between. Its just me, and my fans. Connecting. The way music was intended. I've lost faith in the business, but not in the music. And not in my fans..... You know, there's a line in "a beautiful mind" that I always remember... the wife is at the end of her rope with her husband's disease, his disillusionment, and she says "I have to believe extraordinary things are possible". That's how I know I have to keep moving forward."

CURT SCHNEIDER

"GASOLINE"

Written by Garrison Starr and Curt Schneider

Born in Detroit, Curt Schneider is a Grammy Award winning mixer and musician. Curt grew up in a house full of music that spans back several generations. He spent many days hanging out at the radio station where his mother hosted a weekly music show. He started playing bass at 12. By 15, his fascination with the way records sound and what makes a song some alive inspired him to start producing bands in his basement with recording equipment his grandfather gave him. By 18, he was playing in Detroit's most respected R&B clubs. A few years later, Curt moved to Los Angeles, and has been fortunate enough to work with a wide array of artists.



CHRIS DALLMAN

"OVER MY HEAD" and "MISTAKE"

Words and Music By Chris Dallman

The last year has been full of milestones for singer-songwriter Chris Dallman as he continues to watch his star rise. After years of touring behind his debut album *Race The Light*, 2010 saw the release of 2 new EPs produced by the team of Barrie Maguire (Amos Lee, Natalie Merchant, The Wallflowers) and Rachel Alina (Katy Perry, Adam Lambert, Mika.)

Never Was, an EP of original songs yielded 'Ghosts,' the video for which hit #1 on MTVmusic.com and continues to air on the LOGO Channel.

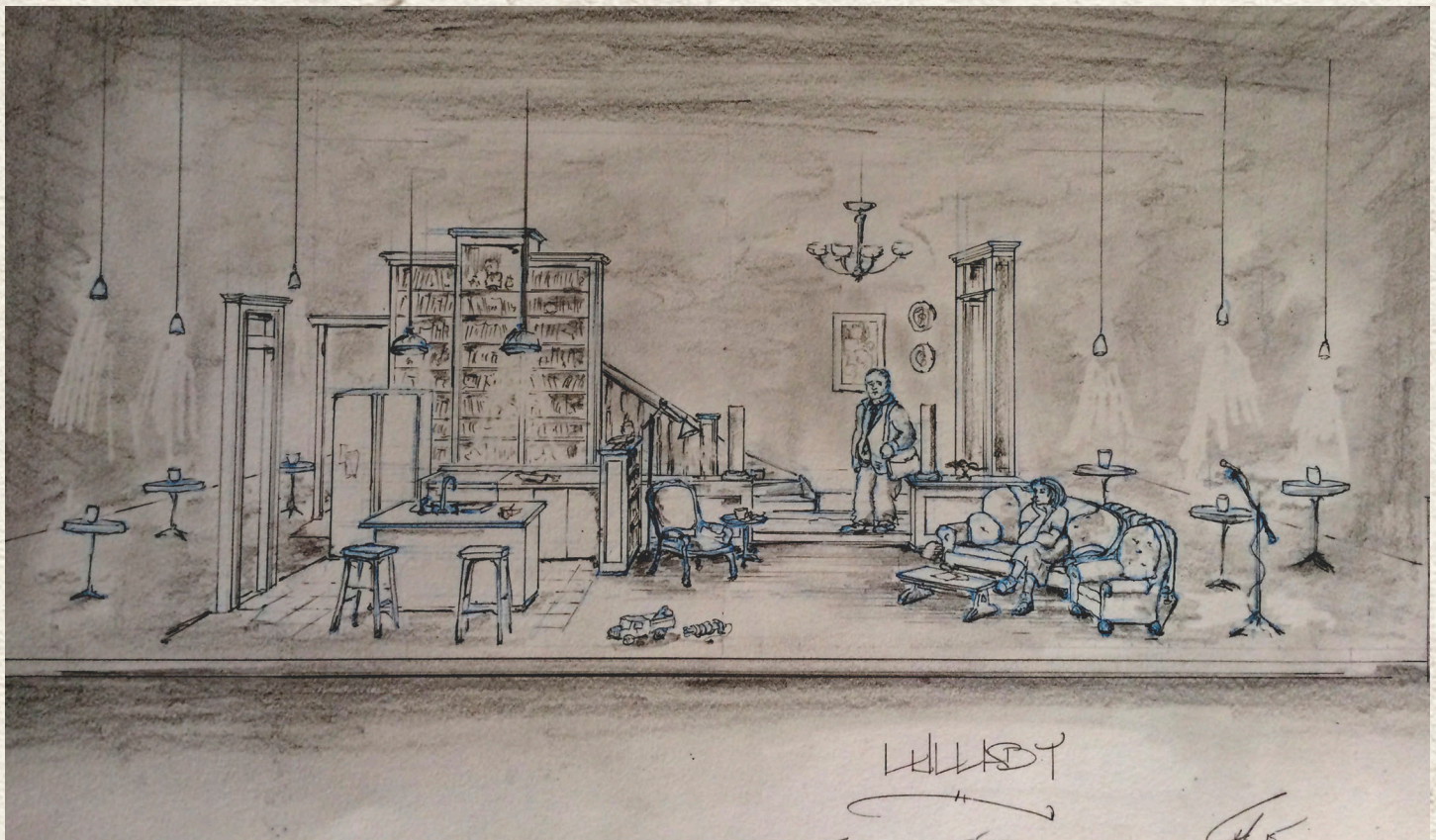
Sad Britney, an EP of 4 classic Britney Spears songs re-imagined in Dallman's own emotional palette reached number #6 on iTunes. It's Dallman's first record to chart and impressive numbers for a grass-roots, internet release.

Dallman frequently licenses music for Television and Film and has shared the stage with such notable artists as Amos Lee, Jonathan Rice, George Stanford, and Ben Lee. You can regularly find him singing for his supper at LA's famed Hotel Café.

MICHAEL ELYANOW

**'MAKE BELIEVE" and "ALL RIGHT"
Music and Lyrics by Michael Elyanow**

Michael Elyanow is grateful to have two plays produced in the Twin Cities in 2016, as Pillsbury House will be staging *The Children* in September. Recent theatre productions: *Robyn Is Happy* at The B Street Theatre; *The Children* at The Theatre @ Boston Court (2013 GLAAD Award winner, published in TheatreForum Magazine); *The Idiot Box* at Open Fist and Naked Eye theatres (published by Samuel French). *A Lasting Mark*, commissioned by Hartford Stage, was part of Manhattan Theatre Club's Reading Series. Michael has developed TV pilots with ACME Productions, Tagline Pictures and more. He dedicates this play to *NEXT*, Theater Latte Da's important new musical initiative and to Lullaby director Jeremy B. Cohen, a most brilliant collaborator both on and offstage.



A scenic sketch for **LULLABY**

Scenic Design by Geoffrey Curly

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Photo by Joe Dickie