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**The 2016 *Encores! Off-Center* season will include *Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, starring Santino Fontana and Skylar Astin, running July 27—30**

**Alums Sutton Foster, Jonathan Groff, and surprise guests will appear in *Off-Center Jamboree!* hosted by Jeanine Tesori, a one-night-only concert on July 16**

**Previously announced production of Elizabeth Swados' *Runaways* runs July 6—9**

**\$25 tickets available Feb 15 for *Peer to Peer* members**

**New York, NY, February 5, 2016**—New York City Center's 2016 *Encores! Off-Center* season will begin with the previously announced production of Elizabeth Swados' landmark 1978 musical *Runaways*, which will run for five performances at City Center from July 6—9. **Sam Pinkleton** will direct and **Ani Taj** will choreograph. The season will continue on July 16 with *Off-Center Jamboree!*, a one-night-only concert featuring alums **Sutton Foster**, **Jonathan Groff**, and special guests, performing selections past, present, and future, with *Encores! Off-Center* Artistic Director **Jeanine Tesori** at the piano. The *Off-Center* season will close with *Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, starring **Santino Fontana** and **Skylar Astin**, running for five performances from July 27—30. The 1979 musical, which marked the first collaboration of Howard Ashman and **Alan Menken**, will be directed by Tony Award winner **Michael Mayer**, with choreography by **Lorin Lattaro**. The 2016 season will be Tesori's fourth and final season leading *Encores! Off-Center*.

"It's time to hand it off to someone else," said Tesori. "I love doing it, and I think it's good to go while I still love it." Tesori will still be a creative force at City Center. "The plan is for me to do concerts or events of some kind," she says, "because I really love the building."

In 1977, Elizabeth Swados spent several months observing and interviewing child runaways before shaping their stories, fears, and fantasies into a musical. A deeply unconventional work in its day, *Runaways* feels

like the funkiest, most heartbreaking mixtape ever to come out of a 1970s boom box, packed with reggae anthems, hip-hop, soul-food lullabies, and spoken-word poetry. Cast largely with students from throughout the five boroughs, the *Encores! Off-Center* production of *Runaways* will honor the crowning achievement of a theater visionary who was ferocious, inspiring, and left us far too soon.

The songs of Howard Ashman and Alan Menken have become part of the American subconscious—but few have heard their first musical, *Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*. The show tells the story of Eliot Rosewater (Santino Fontana), a drunken millionaire who decides to blow his fortune on a town full of pitiable creatures: the illiterate, the depressed, and the eternally pregnant. But there are forces who want to put the kibosh on his philanthropy—like Norman Mushari (Skylar Astin), a lawyer plotting to have Eliot declared insane. With an irresistible crazy-quilt score that volleys between pop, ragtime, Gilbert & Sullivan, and proto-Disney ballads, *Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* deserves to be part of our world again. The *Off-Center* production will feature orchestrations by Danny Troob, heard for the first time this summer.

New York City Center's *Encores! Off-Center* series presents Off-Broadway musicals that pushed creative boundaries when they were first produced. Filtered through the lens of today's artists, these shows are presented not as historical documents but as living, vital works that continue to resonate with audiences. The series also features **The Lobby Project**, a series of free performances, conversations, and readings by groundbreaking artists, poets, authors, and performers. The Lobby Project events place each musical in context of its legacy and provide insights into the work the audience is about to experience. (The schedule of Lobby Project events will be announced at a later date.)

*Off-Center* reflects City Center's ongoing outreach to new and younger audiences. In keeping with this mission, \$25 tickets will be available to college students and young adults starting Feb 15, before the general public. [NOTE: It is necessary to sign up for City Center's free *Peer to Peer* program to be eligible for these advance tickets.] *Peer to Peer*, New York City Center's discount ticket program for students and young adults, provides special ticket offers on select City Center productions for full-time college students as well as to non-students under 25. Students must have valid college IDs or email addresses ending in .edu, and non-students must have valid government-issued IDs with proof of age. They can sign up for the free program at [www.NYCityCenter.org](http://www.NYCityCenter.org) to receive discount offers throughout the season.

Tickets go on sale to the general public Feb 22 (Feb 8 for Members, Feb 15 for *Peer to Peer* members). Tickets can be purchased online at NYCityCenter.org, by calling CityTix at 212.581.1212, or in person at the City Center Box Office. New York City Center is located at 131 West 55<sup>th</sup> Street between 6th and 7th Avenues.

New York City Center gratefully acknowledges the *Encores! Off-Center* Founding Sponsors, Stacey and Eric Mindich and Stacy Bash-Polley; Leadership Sponsor, Nathalie and Pablo Salame; Series Sponsors, American Express, Luigi Caiola and Sean McGill, Andrew Martin-Weber, and the Stephanie and Fred Shuman Fund for *Encores!*; with additional support provided by The Frederick Loewe Foundation, Paula and Ira Resnick and Alec Stais and Elissa Burke. In addition, City Center thanks The Howard Gilman Foundation and Lisa and Richard Witten for their generous support in establishing the Artistic Innovation Fund.

The Lobby Project is sponsored by The Frederick Loewe Foundation.

*Runaways* is presented by special arrangement with SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.  
*Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).

## **2016 Off-Center Season**

### ***Runaways***

July 6—9, Wed and Thu at 7:30, Fri at 8pm, and Sat at 2 and 8pm

### ***Off-Center Jamboree!***

Hosted by Jeanine Tesori

Starring Sutton Foster, Jonathan Groff, and surprise guests

July 16 at 8pm

### ***Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater***

July 27—30, Wed and Thu at 7:30pm, Fri at 8pm, and Sat at 2 and 8pm

## **RUNAWAYS ARTISTS**

**Sam Pinkleton** (Director) is a New York City-based director and choreographer. His work includes *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812* (ART/Kazino; Broadway - Fall 2016); *Machinal* (Broadway/Roundabout); *Amélie* (Berkeley Rep); *Kansas City Choir Boy* with Courtney Love (ART/CTG); *Pretty Filthy* (The Civilians); *Significant Other* (Roundabout); *Heisenberg* (MTC; Broadway - Fall 2016); *Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play*, *Fly By Night*, and *Stage Kiss* (Playwrights Horizons); *Marie Antoinette* (Soho Rep); *Tamburlaine* (TFANA); and *Buyer and Cellar* (Barrow Street/Tour). He has worked regionally with Pig Iron Theatre Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and McCarter Theatre. Current projects include *The Civilians' Rimbaud in New York* (BAM) and *A Doll's House* (TFANA). Sam is an Associate Artist with The Civilians and Witness Relocation and is co-director of The Dance Cartel's long-running dance partyshowthing *ONTHEFLOOR* at the Ace Hotel.

**Ani Taj** (Choreography) is a choreographer, performer, music head and founder of The Dance Cartel. She choreographs contemporary musicals, plays, concerts, music videos, art parties, flash mobs, and more. She is fueled by research trips to Brazil and loves to make dances inspired by Carnaval. Since 2012, The Dance Cartel's acclaimed event *ONTHEFLOOR* has toured many diverse spaces, including Ace Hotel NY, Velocity Dance Center, Bootleg Theater (LA), Brooklyn Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art, NYLA (Studio Series), and Espacio Xisto (Brazil). Music videos for Yoko Ono, Reggie Watts, Vic Mensa, Sarh, and The Sway Machinery. While bridging gaps between dance and music scenes, Ani keeps one foot firmly in the world of live theater. Recent projects include *Lazarus* (NYTW – Assoc. Choreographer), *NOIR* (SAF), *The Nomad* by Elizabeth Swados (The Flea), *Good Men Wanted* (ANTFest, Arena Stages), *Love's Labour's Lost* (Shakespeare in the Park - Asst. Choreo), *Jesse Eisenberg's Asuncion* (Rattlestick), and several projects with Les Freres Corbusier.

## **OFF-CENTER JAMBOREE! ARTISTS**

**Sutton Foster** can currently be seen starring in Darren Star's TV Land series "Younger." She has appeared on Broadway in *Violet*, *Anything Goes* (Tony Award, Drama Desk Award), *Shrek*, *Young Frankenstein*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *Little Women*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Tony Award, Drama Desk Award), *Les Misérables*, *Annie*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and *Grease*. Her Off-Broadway credits include *Trust*. She has appeared in the *Encores!* production of *Anyone Can Whistle*, and the *Encores! Off-Center* productions of *Violet* and *The Wild Party*. Sutton has recorded two solo albums, *Wish* and *An Evening with Sutton Foster: Live at the Café Carlyle*. Her television credits include "Bunheads," "Psych," "Royal Pains," "Law & Order: SVU," "Flight of the Conchords," and "Sesame Street."

**Jonathan Groff** is currently starring as King George in the Broadway production of *Hamilton*. Last summer, he played Gordon Schwinn in the *Encores! Off-Center* production of *A New Brain*. He starred on Broadway as Melchior in *Spring Awakening*, for which he received a Theatre World Award and Tony, Drama Desk, and Drama League Award nominations. His Off-Broadway credits include *Hamilton*, *The Bacchae*, and *Hair* (The Public Theater); *The Submission* (MCC Theatre); and Craig Lucas' *The Singing Forest* and *Prayer for My Enemy* (Obie Award). He starred in *Deathtrap* on the West End and in *Red* in Los Angeles. Film: *American Sniper*, *Frozen*, *C.O.G.*, *The Conspirator*, *Twelve Thirty*, and *Taking Woodstock*. TV: "Boss," "Glee," "The Good Wife," "The Normal Heart," and "Looking." Upcoming: HBO's "Looking" special.

### **KURT VONNEGUT'S GOD BLESS YOU, MR. ROSEWATER ARTISTS**

**Skylar Astin** (Norman Mushari) originated the role of Georg in the Tony- and Grammy Award-winning musical *Spring Awakening*. He will soon be on stage as Tony in Carnegie Hall's special production of *West Side Story* at the Knockdown Center. In film, Skylar is best known for his breakout role as Jesse in *Pitch Perfect* and its sequel *Pitch Perfect 2*. His other film credits include Ang Lee's *Taking Woodstock*, the Sundance favorite *Hamlet 2*, the Disney animated feature *Wreck-It Ralph*, and *21 and Over*, in which he starred opposite Miles Teller. Skylar will next appear opposite Nick Nolte in the EPIX TV series *Graves*. Previous television credits include the lead in the Bill Lawrence-created sitcom *Ground Floor* and memorable roles on *Girls*, *House M.D.*, *Glee*, and *Halt and Catch Fire*.

**Santino Fontana** (Eliot Rosewater) most recently starred on stage in the *Encores!* production of *Zorba!* Broadway: *Act One*, *Cinderella* (Tony Award nomination), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Clarence Derwent Award), *Billy Elliot*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Drama Desk Award), and *Sunday in the Park with George*. New York theater: *Sons of the Prophet* (Lortel and Obie Awards), *The Fantasticks*, and *Perfect Harmony* (co-writer). Regional: *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Death of a Salesman*, *A Christmas Carol*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet* (Guthrie); *Love's Labour's Lost*, *On the Verge*, *September 11th Project* (Chautauqua Theater Co.) Film: *Sisters*, *Frozen*, and *Jack Ryan: Shadow Hunter*. TV: "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend," "Shades of Blue," "The Good Wife," "The Money," "Nurse Jackie," and "Made in Jersey."

**Michael Mayer** (Director) Currently: *Funny Girl* at the Menier Chocolate Factory in London. New York credits include *Hedwig And the Angry Inch*; *Whorl Inside A Loop*; *Brooklynite*; *Spring Awakening*; *American Idiot*; *Side Man*; *Thoroughly Modern Millie*; *A View from the Bridge*; *Everyday Rapture*; *On A Clear Day You Can See Forever*; *Uncle Vanya*; *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*; and *Triumph of Love*. National tours: *Angels in America*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Spring Awakening*, *Charlie Brown*, and *American Idiot*. Michael has received Tony, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Drama League, and Jefferson awards, as well as fellowships from the Drama League, Fox Foundation, TCG/NEA, and Juilliard. Feature films: *The Seagull* (in post-production), *A Home at the End of the World*, and *Flicka*. TV: *Smash* (Season One) and *Alpha House* for Amazon Prime. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut with a celebrated new production of *Rigoletto*. He serves on the Board of New York Stage and Film.

**Lorin Latarro** (Choreography) Broadway credits include *Waitress* and *Waiting For Godot* starring Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen. Lorin served as the Associate Choreographer of *The Curious Incident of the Dog In The Night-Time* and *American Idiot*. She choreographed *Queen Of The Night* (Drama Desk Award), The Public Theater's *The Odyssey* at the Delacorte, Ira Glass and Lin-Manuel Miranda's *21 Chump Street*, *Fanny* at City Center *Encores!*, *Beaches The Musical* at the Drury Lane, *Best Is Yet To Come* (Drama Desk Award), and *Kiss Me Kate* at Barrington. Select opera work includes The Met's *Rigoletto* (associate), *Die Zauberflöte*, and *Love for Three Oranges*. As an Artistic Associate at Bucks County Playhouse, she has choreographed *Company*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *A Taste of Things to Come*. Lorin

performed in 14 Broadway shows and is a graduate and adjunct professor at The Juilliard School. Upcoming: *Twelfth Night* at The Delacorte.

**Chris Fenwick** (*Encores! Off-Center* Music Director) is currently the music director of *Fun Home* on Broadway. He music directed the original productions of Michael John LaChiusa's *Giant*, *Los Otros*, *Queen of the Mist*, and *See What I Wanna See*. Broadway credits include *Rocky*, *Grease*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *The Pajama Game*, *Wonderful Town*, and *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*. Other credits include the Off-Broadway productions of *Hello Again*, *Here Lies Jenny*, *Road Show*, *Happiness*, and *Mother Courage*, and concerts with Patti LuPone at Carnegie Hall, Ravinia Festival, and many more. Chris was music director of the *Encores! Off-Center* productions of *The Wild Party*; *Little Shop of Horrors*; *A New Brain*; *Pump Boys and Dinettes*; *Faust*; *tick, tick...BOOM!*; *I'm Getting My Act Together...*; and *The Cradle Will Rock*.

**Jeanine Tesori** (*Encores! Off-Center* Artistic Director) won the Tony Award for Best Original Score with Lisa Kron for the musical *Fun Home*, which is currently playing on Broadway. She has also written Tony-nominated scores for *Twelfth Night* at Lincoln Center; *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (lyrics, Dick Scanlan); *Caroline, or Change* (lyrics, Tony Kushner); and *Shrek The Musical* (lyrics, David Lindsay-Abaire). The production of *Caroline, or Change* at the National Theatre in London received the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. Her 1997 Off-Broadway musical *Violet* (lyrics, Brian Crawley) opened on Broadway in 2014 and garnered four Tony nominations, including Best Musical Revival. Opera: *A Blizzard on Marblehead Neck* (libretto, Tony Kushner; Glimmerglass) and *The Lion, The Unicorn, and Me* (libretto, J. D. McClatchy, Kennedy Center). Music for plays: *Mother Courage* (dir. George C. Wolfe, with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline), John Guare's *A Free Man of Color* (Lincoln Center Theater, dir. George C. Wolfe), and *Romeo and Juliet* (Delacorte Gala). Film scores: *Nights in Rodanthe*, *Every Day*, and *You're Not You*. Ms. Tesori is a member of the Dramatists Guild and was cited by the ASCAP as the first female composer to have "two new musicals running concurrently on Broadway." She is a lecturer in music at Yale University.

**NEW YORK CITY CENTER** (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. It was Manhattan's first performing arts center, dedicated by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia with a mission to make the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences. Today, City Center is home to many distinguished companies, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, City Center's Principal Dance Company, as well as Manhattan Theatre Club; a roster of renowned national and international visiting artists; and its own critically acclaimed and popular programs. The Tony-honored *Encores!* musical theater series has been hailed as "one of the very best reasons to be alive in New York." In summer 2013, City Center launched *Encores! Off-Center*, a series that features landmark Off-Broadway musicals filtered through the lens of today's most innovative artists. Dance has been integral to the theater's mission from the start — and dance programs, including the annual *Fall for Dance* Festival, remain central to City Center's identity. Vital partnerships with arts organizations including Jazz at Lincoln Center and London's Sadler's Wells Theatre enhance City Center's programmatic offerings. City Center brings dance and musical theater to over 9,000 New York City students each year through its robust education program, and other learning opportunities are offered to seniors, families, and the general public. City Center is expanding its programming beyond the proscenium and activating its alternative spaces with pre-show talks, master classes, exhibitions of visual art, and intimate performances that give an up-close look at the work of the great theater and dance artists of our time. In October 2011, City Center completed an extensive renovation project to revitalize and modernize its historic theater.

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