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## **New York City Center presents The Lobby Project, in conjunction with the *Encores! Off-Center* season**

**Free pre-show events include performances, conversations, workshops, and the opportunity for artists to perform their Alan Menken remixes for Menken himself**

**Performers and panelists include Lisa Kron, Roz Lichter, Shaina Taub, and Jeanine Tesori**

**June 20, 2016/New York, NY**—The Lobby Project, a series of free pre-show events presented in conjunction with New York City Center’s *Encores! Off-Center* season, will take place July 6—9 & 27—30. These events provide an insightful exploration of the topics and themes presented in the season’s musicals through performances, conversations with artists and experts, workshops, and a *Menken Mixtape* contest in which the winners will perform their Alan Menken remixes for Menken himself. The Lobby Project events take place in City Center’s Grand Tier lobby one hour before curtain and are free for that evening’s ticket holders.

Led by Artistic Director Jeanine Tesori, the critically acclaimed *Encores! Off-Center* series returns for its fourth season of landmark Off-Broadway musicals including *Runaways* (July 6—9), *Kurt Vonnegut’s God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* (July 27—30), and the *Off-Center Jamboree* (July 16), a one-night-only concert event featuring *Off-Center* alums Sutton Foster and Jonathan Groff, and other special guests. In keeping with City Center’s founding mission to make the arts accessible to all, many *Off-Center* tickets are \$25.

Tickets can be purchased online at [www.NYCityCenter.org](http://www.NYCityCenter.org), by calling CityTix at 212.581.1212, or at the City Center Box Office (West 55<sup>th</sup> Street between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenues).

### **The Lobby Project events**

**July 6 at 6:30pm      Liz Swados: Rarely Heard, Radically Loved**

Liz Swados’ work reaches far beyond *Runaways* and the world deserves to hear more of it. Kris Kukul, her longtime collaborator and music director, curates an evening of rarely-heard Swados works featuring songwriter, actress, and Swados student Shaina Taub and additional performers from Swados’ cohort.

**July 7 at 6:30pm      Manifest Pussy**

An increasing portion of today’s homeless youth are members of the LGBTQ community. Actress, writer, and trans activist Shakina Nayfack explores her own transition in excerpts from her one-woman show *Manifest Pussy*.

**July 8 at 7pm      Where Do People Go When They Run Away?**

The Ali Forney Center and New Alternatives Center for LGBT Youth provide much needed support for youth who find themselves without homes. *Encores! Off-Center* Artistic Director Jeanine Tesori sits down with Bill

Torres (Ali Forney Center) and Kate Barnhart (New Alternatives Center) for a conversation about the role of these important organizations in today's urban environment.

**July 9 at 1pm            Chicks with Picks**

In honor of Swados' strength as a musician and performer, singer-songwriters Grace McLean and Crystal Monee Hall present an immersive concert of their own work and lead participants in a group piece.

**July 9 at 7pm            The Way She Worked**

*Runaways* director Sam Pinkleton and choreographer Ani Taj both studied with Liz Swados at NYU Tisch. In this workshop, they will share her teaching philosophy and technique, leading audience participants in an exercise and discussing their experiences working with her.

**July 27 at 6:30pm        Menken Mixtape**

In honor of the revival of *Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*, producers, house/electronic musicians, spoken word artists, and music-makers of all styles are challenged to remix a work from composer Alan Menken's songbook—to sample it, adapt it, and make it their own. Winners will present their pieces before the opening night performance of *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* for Alan Menken himself and receive an honorarium of \$200. The deadline for submissions is July 6.

For full details, visit: [www.nycitycenter.org/Menken-Mixtape](http://www.nycitycenter.org/Menken-Mixtape)

**July 28 at 6:30pm        "The One Before"**

Many writers had extraordinary, seldom-heard shows hit the stage before their breakthrough work. Jen Tepper, director of programming at 54 Below, curates this evening of songs from influential shows like *In Trousers* to *Lucky Stiff* that shaped the careers of Broadway legends.

**July 29 at 7pm            Greed**

TheatreMAMA curates this immersive event on the themes of greed, money, giving, and philanthropy.

**July 30 at 1pm            Love and Legacy**

Both *Runaways* and *Kurt Vonnegut's God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* were created by artists who left us far too soon. Roz Lichter (the wife of Liz Swados) and Julie Larson (the sister of composer Jonathan Larson) discuss their role in maintaining the integrity of the art left behind by those they love.

**July 30 at 7pm            Give and Take**

Tony Award winner Lisa Kron will explore the economic inequality of who gives, who takes, and who's left in the middle in the final Lobby Project event of the season.

The Lobby Project is sponsored by The Frederick Loewe Foundation.

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.

***Encores! Off-Center*** was founded in 2013 with the mission of presenting 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 New York Times* has called *Encores! Off-Center* “a summer theater highlight,” with past productions including *Violet* with Sutton Foster (which transferred to Broadway the following year); *tick, tick...BOOM!* with Lin-Manuel Miranda; *A New Brain* with Jonathan Groff; and *Little Shop of Horrors* with Ellen Greene and Jake Gyllenhaal.

**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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