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Dan Fogler, Ana Gasteyer and Aaron Lazar
join
Jonathan Groff
in
A New Brain

Music and Lyrics by William Finn
Book by William Finn and James Lapine
Directed by James Lapine, Choreographed by Josh Prince

The Opening Production of the 2015 *Encores! Off-Center* Season
Jeanine Tesori, Artistic Director; Chris Fenwick, Music Director

June 24 – 27 at New York City Center

New York, N.Y., May 18, 2015– **Jenni Barber, Quentin Earl Darrington, Bradley Dean, Dan Fogler, Ana Gasteyer, Josh Lamon, Aaron Lazar, Alyse Alan Louis** and **Rema Webb** will join the previously announced **Jonathan Groff** in the *Encores! Off-Center* production of **William Finn** and **James Lapine’s A New Brain**, running June 24 – 27, 2015. The production will be directed by **James Lapine**, with choreography by **Josh Prince**.

A New Brain, inspired by William Finn’s personal experiences, is a medical tragedy seen through the iris of a Looney Tunes short. After struggling composer Gordon Michael Schwinn (Jonathan Groff) collapses face-first into a plate of spaghetti, he is diagnosed with a brain tumor and is forced to come to terms with his creative ambitions and the lovable screw-ups in his life: an overbearing mother (Ana Gasteyer), a ruthless kiddie-show host (Dan Fogler), and a boyfriend who’d “rather be sailing” (Aaron Lazar). The musical opened at Lincoln Center Theater on June 18, 1998 and ran for 78 performances, winning the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway Musical.

A New Brain is the opening production of **New York City Center’s** acclaimed ***Encores! Off-Center*** series, which is returning for a third season of landmark Off-Broadway musicals. ***A New Brain*** will be followed by ***Little Shop of Horrors***, starring **Jake Gyllenhaal, Ellen Greene** and **Taran Killam**, playing for three performances on July 1 and 2. **Andrew Lippa’s *The Wild Party***, starring **Sutton Foster**, wraps up the season, playing July 15-18. **Jeanine Tesori** is the Artistic Director of *Encores! Off-Center* and **Chris Fenwick** is Music Director.

THE CAST

Jenni Barber (Waitress/Nancy D)’s Broadway credits include *Wicked* (Glinda), *The Nance*, *Annie* (Grace

Farrell), *The Performers* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. New York and regional credits include *Private Lives* (Hartford Stage), *As You Like It* and *The Tempest* (directed by Sam Mendes with The Bridge Project), and *From Up Here* (MTC). Her television credits include "The Untitled Aziz Ansari Project," "Elementary," "Smash," "Law & Order: SVU" and "The Electric Company." Jenni recently appeared in the *Encores!* production of *Paint Your Wagon*.

Quentin Earl Darrington (Minister) made his Broadway debut as Coalhouse Walker in the 2009 revival of *Ragtime*. Regionally, he toured in *Memphis*, *Abyssinia*, *Ragtime*, *The Color Purple* and *The Lion King*.

Bradley Dean (Dr. Jafar)'s Broadway credits include *Doctor Zhivago*, *The Last Ship*, *Evita*, *A Little Night Music*, *Company*, *Spamalot*, *Man of La Mancha* and *Jane Eyre*. Bradley appeared in the *Encores!* production of *The Most Happy Fella*.

Dan Fogler (Mr. Bungee) won a Tony Award for his performance as William Barfee in *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. His Off-Broadway and regional credits include *The Voyage of the Carcass*, *Little Exodus*, *Bobby Gould In Hell* and *Joe Fearless*. Dan wrote and directed *Elephant In The Room* (inspired by Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*), which was performed at the 2007 NYC Fringe Festival and produced by Stage 13, the film and theater production company of which he is a founding member. Dan's film and TV credits include *Balls of Fury*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Taking Woodstock*, *Scenic Route*, *Don Peyote*, *Take Me Home Tonight*, *Fanboys*, "The Goldbergs," "Secrets and Lies" and "Hannibal."

Ana Gasteyer (Mimi Schwinn)'s Broadway credits include *The Royal Family*, *Wicked* (Elphaba), *The Threepenny Opera* (Mrs. Peachum) and *The Rocky Horror Show* (Columbia). Other theater credits include *Girl Crazy* at *Encores!*; *Kimberly Akimbo* Off-Broadway; *Cinderella* at New York City Opera; Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* (Pittsburgh CLO); Fosca in *Passion* (Jefferson Award nomination); and Elphaba in *Wicked* (Jefferson Award nomination). Ana was a cast member of "Saturday Night Live" from 1996 to 2002. Her other film and TV credits include "Suburgatory," *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2*, "The Goldbergs," *What Women Want*, *Mean Girls*, *Reefer Madness* (also cast album), "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "The Good Wife" and "Girls." Ana released her solo album *I'm Hip* in 2014.

Jonathan Groff (Gordon Michael Schwinn) recently appeared as King George in The Public Theater's production of *Hamilton*. On Broadway, he starred as Melchior in *Spring Awakening*, for which he received a Theatre World Award and Tony, Drama Desk and Drama League award nominations. Jonathan's Off-Broadway credits include *The Submission* (MCC Theater); *The Bacchae* (The Public Theater); Craig Lucas' *The Singing Forest*; *Prayer for My Enemy* (Obie Award); and The Public Theater revival of *Hair*. He starred in *Deathtrap* on the West End and in *Red* in Los Angeles. His television work includes "Looking," "Boss," "Glee," "The Good Wife" and HBO's "The Normal Heart." His films include *American Sniper*, *Frozen*, *C.O.G.*, *The Conspirator*, *Twelve-Thirty* and *Taking Woodstock*.

Josh Lamon (Richard) can currently be seen on Broadway in *Finding Neverland*. He previously appeared on Broadway in *Hair* and *Elf*. Josh's other New York credits include *Little Miss Sunshine* (Second Stage), *February House* (Public Theater), *Into the Woods* (Shakespeare in the Park) and *Little Me* (*Encores!*). His television work includes *30 Rock* (NBC) and *Deadbeat* (Hulu).

Aaron Lazar (Roger) has appeared on Broadway in *The Last Ship*, *A Little Night Music*, *Impressionism*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Les Misérables*, *Oklahoma!*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Mamma Mia!*, and *The Light in the Piazza*. Aaron appeared in the *Encores!* production of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. His film and TV credits include *This Is Where I Leave You*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *J. Edgar*, *Company*, "The Blacklist," "The Good Wife," "Onion News Network," "A Gifted Man," "The Following," and others.

Alyse Alan Louis (Rhoda) recently played Becky/Taylor in the world premiere of the Civilians musical *Pretty Filthy*. Her other stage credits include Sophie in *Mamma Mia!* on Broadway, Janet in *The Rocky Horror Show* at the Bucks County Playhouse, *Academia Nuts* (NYMF), *The Civil War* (Lucille Lortel), *Camp Wanatachi* (LaMaMa), and *Bells Are Ringing (Encores!)*.

Rema Webb (Homeless Woman) recently appeared in *The Colored Museum*, written by George C. Wolfe and directed by Billy Porter, at the Huntington Theatre Company (Elliot Norton Award for Best Ensemble). Rema was featured as Lula Buffington in the Broadway revival of *Violet*. She is a 16-year cast member of Disney's *The Lion King*. Her other notable credits include *The Book of Mormon* (original Broadway cast) and *Ragtime* (both Broadway and national tour). Last fall, Rema made her 54 Below solo concert debut with *Children Will Listen*.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

William Finn (Music, Lyrics, and Co-Librettist) is well known for his trilogy of short musical shows: *In Trousers*, *March of the Falsettos* and *Falsettoland*. The final two shows were combined into *Falsettos*, which ran for 486 performances on Broadway and won Tony Awards for Best Score and Best Book (the latter shared with James Lapine). Finn and Lapine's other collaborations include *Little Miss Sunshine* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, which is currently one of the most performed musicals in the United States. Finn is also the composer of *Romance in Hard Times* and *Elegies, A Song Cycle*. For television, he provided the music and lyrics for "Ira Sleeps Over," "Tom Thumb and Thumbelina" and "The Poky Little Puppy's First Christmas." Finn teaches a weekly master class at the NYU Tisch Graduate Program in Musical Theatre Writing and is the Artistic Producer of the Barrington Stage Company's Musical TheatreLab.

James Lapine (Co-Librettist and Director) is a playwright, librettist and director. With William Finn he has also collaborated on *March of the Falsettos* and *Falsettoland*, later presented on Broadway as *Falsettos; Muscle; The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (director); and *Little Miss Sunshine*. Broadway credits include *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods*, *Dirty Blonde*, *Golden Child*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Amour*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, *Annie* and his adaptation of Moss Hart's memoir *Act One*. He has also worked extensively Off-Broadway and is the author of six plays. He has received three Tony and five Drama Desk Awards as well as the Pulitzer Prize. In 2010 he was inducted into the Theater Hall of Fame.

Josh Prince (Choreographer)'s Broadway credits include *Beautiful: The Musical* and *Shrek The Musical* (Outer Critics Circle nomination). He choreographed *Bunty Berman Presents* and *The Kid* for The New Group, as well as *The Jerry Springer Opera* (Carnegie Hall), *Camelot* (NY Philharmonic) and *All Singing All Dancing* (Town Hall). He has choreographed for the Columbia Ballet Collaborative, Fire Island Dance Festival, Career Transitions for Dancers, The Bridge Project and the Kennedy Center. Josh is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Broadway Dance Lab.

Chris Fenwick (*Encores! Off-Center* Music Director) is currently the music director of Jeanine Tesori's and Lisa Kron's *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 Cradle Will Rock*, *I'm Getting My Act Together, tick, tick...BOOM!*, *Faust* and *Pump Boys and Dinettes*.

New York City Center's *Encores! Off-Center* series has been called "a summer theater highlight" by Charles Isherwood of *The New York Times* and "my favorite new arts institution" by Linda Winer of *Newsday*. The 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 that takes place in City Center's grand tier lobby one hour before the mainstage performance. The Lobby Project events place each musical in the context of its legacy and provide insights into the work the audience is about to experience. (Schedule of Lobby Project events TBA.)

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, and Andrew Martin-Weber; with additional support provided by The Frederick Loewe Foundation, Paula and Ira Resnick, Alec Stais and Elissa Burke, and the Stephanie and Fred Shuman Fund for *Encores!*

The Lobby Project is sponsored by The Frederick Loewe Foundation.

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 is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to New York City students and teachers through programs such as *Encores! In Schools* and the Young People's Dance Series. Special workshops cater to families, seniors, and other groups, while events such as the *Fall for Dance* DanceTalk series offer learning opportunities to the general public. In October 2011, City Center completed an extensive renovation project to revitalize and modernize its historic theater.

A New Brain runs June 24 – 27, 2015 according to the following schedule: Wednesday at 7:30pm, Thursday at 7:30pm, Friday at 8pm, and Saturday at 2 and 8pm. Tickets start at \$25 and can be purchased at the New York City Center Box Office (West 55th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues), through CityTix® at 212-581-1212, or online at www.NYCityCenter.org.

Program and artists subject to change.