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
Good Wife,” “Onion News Network,” “A Gifted Man,” “The Following” credits include the Piazz Tale of Two Cities Aaron Lazar television work includes Josh Lamon in The Singing Forest Broadway credits include 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).


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 Exodous, 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.
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 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.