

# PLAYBILL®



MUSICAL THEATER  
SONGWRITING  
CHALLENGE

PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS  
PARTNERING WITH THE AMERICAN THEATRE WING AND  
IN COLLABORATION WITH PLAYBILL, INC., DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS, AND SAMUEL FRENCH



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This evening features original songs by our 2018 finalists:

**Eliza Corrington** from Syracuse, Utah  
**Braxton Gerald Carr** from Harrisville, Utah  
**Tucker Donelan** from New York, New York  
**Jillian Guetersloh** from Bedford, Massachusetts  
**Fritz Hager** from Flint, Texas  
**Aaron Richert** from New Orleans, Louisiana  
**David Volpini** from Macomb, Michigan

The \$25,000 scholarship for the national champion is generously provided by the National Music Publishers Association's S.O.N.G.S. Foundation. The second place winner receives \$10,000 contributed by BMI and the third place winner receives \$5,000 from the Entertainment Industry Foundation.

The National Endowment for the Arts and its partners are deeply grateful to these organizations for their support.

All finalist songs will be published by Samuel French

**Monday, April 23rd, 2018**  
The Jerome L. Greene Performance Space

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# FINALISTS

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Braxton Carr



Eliza Corrington



Tucker Donelan



Jillian Guetersloh



Fritz Hager



Aaron Richert



David Volpini

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# WHO'S WHO: FINALISTS

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## **BRAXTON GERALD CARR – Harrisville, UT**

Braxton Gerald Carr is the middle child of three kids. He has an older brother and younger sister (who is the best). He started to play music in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade with violin. After three years of violin, he started playing guitar, ukulele, and cello. Guitar is by far the instrument that he has become the most comfortable with and is the key instrument in most of the music that he plays and writes. His favorite songs to play are the ones that he writes. He has been in many musicals, in most of which he played supporting lead roles (like Michael in *Elf*). The most fun musical theater experience that he has had up till now is his role as Harold, in *Fly by Night*. At the moment he works as a shift leader at Cold Stone. Most people will start a new job and slowly start to hate what they sell but he doesn't think he's loved ice cream more in my entire life. His family is almost as important to him as cake batter ice cream. His sister is one of the sweetest people on this earth, and he couldn't consider himself luckier to have someone like her to correct his spelling. His brother is okay (I guess). His dad has been very supportive of his love for music and has by far the shiniest bald head he has seen in my life. His Mom has also been very supportive and gives the best hugs ever. He'd also like to thank his stepmom and his stepdad for putting up with his loud guitar playing. As a hobby and means of transportation he enjoys riding my bike. For a while it was how he got to work and then he started to really enjoy riding distances. He hopes to be able to complete the tour of Utah (one of the longest bike tours) someday hopefully soon. He couldn't be more excited to participate in the NEA's songwriting challenge and improve his habits as a songwriter in musical theater. Eliza and Braxton have been working very hard and can't wait to see how the song they wrote together will improve during the finalists' weekend and sound with professionals performing it.

## **ELIZA CORRINGTON – Syracuse, UT**

Eliza Corrington is a senior at DaVinci Academy of Science and the Arts, a sister to 5 brothers, and an optimist with a burning passion for musical theatre and performing. An early memory of hers is turning on the song "Roxie" from the Broadway show Chicago and singing along and dancing around the house. She has been involved in theatre for 15 years, both onstage and behind the scenes. She participated in her local theatre organization, the Nibley Children's Theatre, every summer for a decade, performing in the ensemble, as a lead, in stage crew, and as a composer and arranger. Her most significant moments in theatre have been while performing for DaVinci Academy, some favorites including being ensemble member and student director in *Fly By Night* in 2017, competing in the 2017 Utah Shakespeare Festival and 2018 State Utah Thespians Festival, and recently *Baroness Stride* in *Jekyll and Hyde*. She loves every moment of being in DaVinci Academy's theatre program and being able to learn from the many talented students and directors she is surrounded with. Her love for music extends beyond the contemporary Broadway world and into the classical music sphere. Eliza has played violin since 3rd grade and has been a member of the Northern Utah Youth Symphony for 5 years. She plays violin, percussion, and piano, but her favorite instrument is her voice. Her dedication to multiple areas of fine arts is complemented by her joy for STEM, especially anything that has to do with space. Determined to literally shoot for the stars, she wishes to become an astronaut pilot or commander and astrophysicist. She works for the summer camp Astro Camp Utah, sharing her love for astronomy with children, and teaching them the wonders of space through space shuttle mission simulations. These simulations feel so similar to her many theatre performances and Eliza uses the skills and tricks she's learned from theatre to create as real an experience for her campers as she possibly can. The memories she gained working for Astro Camp helped inspire her to write the song "Ten Seconds to Infinity" with her partner Braxton Carr. She is a high honor roll student and a Sterling Scholar Semi Finalist in Theatrical Arts. When she's not in front of an audience, Eliza returns to her many hobbies like painting, reading, and singing in the shower. A nerd through and through, Eliza enjoys playing made up geeky games with her younger brothers, usually dissolving into a lightsaber of Jedi vs Sith.

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# WHO'S WHO: FINALISTS

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## **TUCKER DONELAN – New York, NY**

Tucker Donelan is a half Japanese, half American senior at the Berkshire School in Sheffield, MA, although he currently lives in New York City. Tucker has had the privilege of living in four continents and has thus cultivated a multicultural and multidisciplinary approach to everything he does. From the bustling metropolises of Johannesburg, Tokyo, and New York to humbler towns in Spain and Massachusetts, Tucker's own experiences have become the fuel for his creativity. Tucker's musical journey began at the age of three at the School for Strings in New York City. A classically trained violinist, Tucker learned the foundations of music theory at a young age. Those lessons helped not only in his ability to learn a variety of other instruments over the years, but also in composing and arranging music for chamber music ensembles, a capella groups, and, eventually, theatrical competitions. In addition to music, Tucker is a devoted academic, graduating Cum Laude with honors this spring and heading to Tufts University in the fall where he hopes to study conservation ecology and climatology in addition to continuing his musical passions. However, he also enjoys studying poetry and prose fiction, a testament to his love for the written word and his emerging lyricism. The culmination of academia, his upbringing, and his musical influences are what have created Tucker's tailored musical style. In global citizenship, Tucker found a desire to seek out and understand the social issues of his communities that he grew up fortunate enough to avoid the consequences of. In school, Tucker found an abundance of legendary writers to learn from. In both the intensive study and performance of music, Tucker found a desire to create and a toolbox of harmony, rhythmic variation, and chord building. However, what is perhaps most important and certainly most relevant to this competition, Tucker has recently had the opportunity to see the music that he wishes to create be accepted into mainstream theater. Tucker has been following Lin Manuel Miranda since Mr. Miranda was performing with his New York based rap group, Freestyle Love Supreme. Mr. Miranda's recent success in bringing rap to Broadway theaters has empowered Tucker to realize the sum of his musical and academic parts and write music that he believes he is good at writing. Tucker loves music and understands that he has much to learn. He is deeply appreciative of this opportunity and is excited to see what becomes of it.

## **JILLIAN GUETERSLOH – Bedford, MA**

Jillian Guetersloh is a freshman at Bedford High School in Bedford, MA, where she lives with her parents, brother, and dog. From an early age, Jillian expressed a passion for music, writing, and art. She started singing in her church's children's choir in preschool and began piano lessons in kindergarten, then switched to the cello in 4th grade, though she still enjoys playing the piano today. Jillian learned the mechanics of writing contemporary music at the Real School of Music in Burlington, MA where she participated in their week-long RealJams summer program for the past two years. At RealJams, youths are assembled into "bands" based on their instrumental and vocal proficiencies. They learn the conventions of songwriting first then the youths collaborate to write, record a soundtrack, and create a music video for an original song, culminating in a live performance on their final day. In middle school, Jillian was active in musical theater during the school year as well as their summer theater program. Her roles include Rafiki (*Lion King Jr*), King Julien (*Madagascar*), and Cheshire Cat (*Alice in Wonderland*) and she was a cast member in *Annie Jr*, *Pirates of Penzance*, and *Beauty and the Beast Jr*. Jillian was a cellist in the middle school orchestra. She also performed as a vocalist in the middle school's rock cover band during her seventh and eighth grade years. Now, as a freshman in high school, Jillian has participated in the fall musical *Noises Off* as part of the backstage crew and in the spring musical *Seussical* where she played the minor role of Judge Yertle the Turtle. Jillian is currently participating in her high school's playwrights festival, in which students write, direct, design, and perform ten-minute plays. Jillian has written a ten minute play and is directing a play written by another student. She plays cello in the high school orchestra. Outside of music and theater, Jillian also loves painting, traveling, and spending time with

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# WHO'S WHO: FINALISTS

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friends. Even though she cannot vote, Jillian believes in the importance of being politically active, and she participated in 2017's historic Women's March and the March for Our Lives in 2018. In eighth grade, she and a group of other students formed the Student Egalitarian Association, whose goal was to make school a more comfortable place for all students. The club succeeded in changing the school's gender-biased and ineffective dress code, which remains one of Jillian's proudest achievements. In 2017, Jillian was awarded the Superior Writing Certificate, the highest honor in the Promising Young Writers Program of the National Council of Teachers of English. Jillian's favorite foods are chicken pot pie, cashew turtle ice cream and anything chocolate.

## **FRITZ HAGER – Flint, TX**

Fritz Hager is an eighteen year old senior at Tyler Lee high school in Tyler Texas and is number two out of six kids. Fritz has been performing ever since he was a little kid, and is continuing to pursue his dreams of performing, and hopefully get paid for it some day! Fritz started writing around the age of thirteen, writing his first song after his first guitar lesson, and for several years honed his skills as a writer by entering several songwriting competitions, participating in multiple songwriting workshops, all while playing gigs at the local farmers markets and coffee shops. Fritz began writing with a very contemporary style, greatly influenced by artists such as Ed Sheeran and John Mayer. After winning first place at the Wildflower Budding Talent competition and the 2014-2015 National PTA reflections contest in the category of musical composition, Fritz was introduced to the world of the theater. His first musical he participated in was the stage adaptation of High School Musical, playing the role of Ryan Evans. While being a part of the show, he was exposed to musicals, and learned that there is a place for contemporary music within the musical theater genre. He was inspired by the stories and characters that were told through the music of shows like *The Last Five Years* and *Dear Evan Hansen* and decided to merge his passion for songwriting and theater. It wasn't until the end of his junior year that he began to write from a musical theater perspective, taking his indie contemporary style and fusing it into a new medium in order to create a signature sound and feel to the music he creates. Inspired by the works of writers such as Jason Robert Brown, and the powerhouse duo Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, Fritz began working on his own musical surrounding the life of a musician and his rise and fall from stardom, drawing from his own yearnings and aspirations as a performer. As a senior, Fritz has received several acting awards, including the award of Best Actor at the bi-district level of the UIL One Act Play competition. He will also be attending Oklahoma City University this fall as a musical theater/ vocal performance double major.

## **AARON RICHERT – New Orleans, LA**

Aaron Richert is 17 years old, and a senior at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts in New Orleans, Louisiana. Aaron started doing theatre in an effort to be more like his older brother, Michael, but ended up falling head over heels the instant he step foot on stage. He has been performing since 5 and started playing instruments at 7. His first instrument was a violin, before he began piano, and along the way taught himself guitar, ukulele, bass, cajon, and accordion (but cannot for the life of him remember how to play violin). He has always lived for music, always playing or listening as much as he could, and finding every opportunity around New Orleans to express that side of himself, whether that be singing and playing at churches or singing with his teenage barbershop quartet ("The Ragamuffins"). Aaron has always been a performer first and everything else second, and while he loves writing music, he had never considered himself a composer. His first venture into it was as a form of catharsis before anything else, writing songs about all of his friends and how he felt about them at the time, which turned into a never released song cycle titled "Frequent Visitors: Or How to Lose Your Friends." After the song cycle, and a few ventures into barbershop arrangements, he decided to try the next reasonable step and attempt music direction. After being the Assistant Music Director/Rehearsal Accompanist on a local

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## WHO'S WHO: FINALISTS

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production of "Xanadu," he knew that he had found a new passion (in addition to performing, of course). He will be pursuing his new love of Music Direction over the summer before pursuing a BFA in Musical Theatre. He hopes to continue his newfound passion for composition and arranging throughout college and afterwards. He would like to thank William Finn, Stephen Sondheim, and Ben Folds for constantly inspiring him, and his brothers, mentors, and friends for supporting him in his effort to channel that inspiration. And of course, he would like to thank his mother for putting up with his endless need to make the most noise on as many instruments as possible through every hour of the night, as well as everything else she has done (and she has done so much). Thank you so much!

### **DAVID VOLPINI III – Macomb, MI**

Music has always been a massive part of David Volpini's life. When he was little he would run around his house screaming the lyrics of his favorite songs and sing along to the radio in the car. Volpini started drum lessons when he was in fourth grade and joined the band in middle school. This year, he was in my school's musical and joined the choir all whilst getting into my bands Wind Ensemble. He began writing songs on his fifteenth birthday party where he wrote his first song called, The Baby Song, which was written to soothe his friend's fear of babies. Ever since then he's been writing songs on my ukulele always with some kind of twist. About a year ago he began writing his musical because he wanted to expand his writing portfolio, and he already had a basic plot ready. The first song Volpini wrote for his musical was called Death Is Temporary, and shortly after that he wrote Day Number One. As the year went on, he wrote more songs for his musical and told his friends all about it and one day his friend Mimi sent him a link to the Musical Songwriting Challenge, and he knew he had to enter. He got to work on making a backing track for Day Number One and recording it and finally he submitted it. It's been an amazing journey up to this point, and he is excited to see where this takes him in his writing career and where it takes his musical. Volpini wants to thank his friends for always listening to his songs in the early stages and for encouraging his song writing and performing. Rachel, Sydney, Mimi, and Maddie have all made this possible for him. He also wants to thank his mom and dad for letting him pursue his dreams and do what he wants, even if it doesn't always seem like the most rational decision at first. You can find some of his comedy songs on his YouTube channel, David Volpini, and he'll be releasing his first album soon, so be on the lookout for that as well.

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# MENTORS/MUSIC DIRECTORS

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## Mentors



César Alvarez



Ty DeFoe



J. Oconer Navarro



Shakina Nayfack



Anna K. Jacobs



Tidtaya Sinutoke



Max Vernon

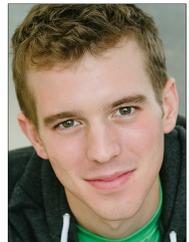
## Music Directors



Anna Ebbesen



Ben Rauhala



Patrick Sulken

# WHO'S WHO: MENTORS/MUSIC DIRECTORS

## **CÉSAR ALVAREZ – Mentor, Aaron Richert**

César Alvarez is a New York-based composer, lyricist, and writer. His work lives in the intersection of music, theater and participatory performance. César has written four full-length musicals, released four albums with his band The Lisps, and composed scores for contemporary dance, plays and film. His musical FUTURITY received the 2016 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical, four other Lortel Nominations. César has received two Drama Desk Nominations, a Sundance/Ucross fellowship and a Jonathan Larson Award. Recent composition credits: FURURITY (Soho Rep/Ars Nova, A.R.T, Walker Art Center, Mass MoCA); The Elementary Spacetime Show (FringeArts/UAarts); Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' An Octoroon (Soho Rep, TFANA); Washeteria (Soho Rep); The Foundry Theater's Good Person of Szechwan (LaMaMa, The Public Theater); In development: The Universe is a Small Hat, a multi-player participatory musical (Berkeley Rep Ground Floor, Civilians R&D Group, PRELUDE NYC, Babycastles, Sarah Lawrence College) and NOISE (NYU/Playwrights Downtown). César is a 2018-20 Princeton Arts Fellow and the founding Artistic Director of Polyphone, a festival of new musicals at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory and received his MFA at Bard College. [www.musicisfreenow.org](http://www.musicisfreenow.org)

## **TY DEFOE – Mentor, Eliza Corrington & Braxton Carr**

**Ty Defoe (Giizhig) (He| Him | They | We | Us)** Oneida and Ojibwe Nations. Recent Off-Broadway credit: Masculinity Max (Directed by Dustin Wills, The Public Theater). Recent Television: Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt (Netflix). Grammy Award and 2017 Jonathan Larson Award winner. Book and lyrics, Clouds Are Pillows for the Moon with composer Tidtaya Sinutoke (Yale Institute for Musical Theatre, ASCAP Musical Theatre Workshop); Hart Island Requiem (The Civilians R&D Group, GoodSpeed Musicals); Red Pine (Native Voices at the Autry; IAA of Santa Fe); The Way They Lived (by Micharne Cloughley with The Civilians at the Met). [tydefoe.com](http://tydefoe.com)

## **J. OCONER NAVARRO – Mentor, Fritz Hager**

**J. OCONER NAVARRO** is an award-winning writer, music director, arranger, pianist, vocal coach, and educator based in NYC. He is a recipient of the American Theatre Wing Jonathan Larson Grant, and an alumnus of the Composer-Librettist Studio at New Dramatists. AWAKENING, his musical based upon the novella by Kate Chopin (Book by Jenny Stafford, Lyrics by Joel B. New) was a Finalist for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Music Theater Conference, the Yale Institute of Music Theatre, the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, and the recipient of the Margo Lion Award. His one-act musical BIRTH DAY (conceived with Diana Glazer) was developed and produced by Prospect Theater Company and was also presented for National Asian Artists Project's inaugural Discover: New Musicals series. ONWARD, a musical triptych (Words by Katie Kring) was developed by Prospect Theater Company and played Off-Broadway's 59E59 Theaters. THE NEW PEGGY (Book by co-lyrics by Drew Larimore) played a successful concert at The Green Room 42 and will be released in radio play format in Summer 2018. He is currently penning a new musical about a family living through the collapse and gentrification of Detroit with Van Lier fellow Keelay Gipson; a cross-historical and international examination at how women's fashion enhances, masks, and manipulates women's sexuality with playwright Cheri Magid; and a Filipino-American chamber piece that delves into the loss of culture through generations, and how looking back helps and hinders moving forward. J. is widely recognized for his work in Music Direction. Broadway Music Department: CURTAINS, THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES, MARY POPPINS, NEXT TO NORMAL Off-Broadway: FIRST DAUGHTER SUITE (The Public Theater; Cast Album: Ghostlight/Sh-K-Boom Records), iOW@ (Playwrights Horizons), ADDING MACHINE (Minetta Lane Theatre; Lortel, Obie, and Outer Critics Circle Awards; Cast Album: PS Classics), SUMMER AND SMOKE (Transport Group/Classic Stage Company), WE THE PEOPLE (Theatreworks USA; Lortel Nomination), WHIDA PERU: RESURRECTION TANGLE (Primary Stages), TWELFTH NIGHT (The Public Theater/Public Works/ Shakespeare in the Park) Regional: MY SCARY GIRL (Barrington Stage Company), THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE, ONCE ON THIS ISLAND, RAGTIME (Hangar Theatre), BARRIO GRRRL! (The Kennedy Center; Helen Hayes Nomination), BENNY AND

# WHO'S WHO: MENTORS/MUSIC DIRECTORS

OON (The Old Globe, Paper Mill Playhouse), RAIN (The Old Globe, World Premiere), new arrangements for Disney's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD (Two River Theater Company). Workshops/Concerts: The Guthrie Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, New York Stage and Film, Theatreworks - Silicon Valley, Westport Country Playhouse. Additionally, J. is Arranger for CAMP BROADWAY, Resident Music Director at LINCOLN CENTERTHEATER - Education Department, Resident Composer for THE CHURCH OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE, NYC. Teaching: Founding Faculty, NYU/Tisch School of the Arts - New Studio on Broadway; Faculty, Stella Adler Studio of Acting - Musical Theatre Intensive Education: MFA, NYU

## SHAKINA NAYFAK – Mentor, Tucker Donelan

Most known for her work as Lola on the Hulu Original Comedy Series *Difficult People*, Shakina can also be seen as Frankie on Marvel's *Jessica Jones* (Netflix) and *The Detour* (TBS). On Broadway: *24-Hour Plays* and *Gypsy of the Year*. Off-Broadway: *Masculinity Max* at The Public Theater, *Manuel Versus the Statue of Liberty* (as Lady Liberty). Founding Artistic Director of Musical Theatre Factory ([www.mtf.nyc](http://www.mtf.nyc)), Shakina has supported the development of over 120 new musicals including an autobiographical rock musical about her gender confirmation, *Manifest Pussy*, which premiered at Joe's Pub in 2016, and the rock opera *JUNK* with the Swedish pop band Brainpool. Also at Joe's Pub: *One Woman Show* (2013), *Post-Op* (2015). Shakina is a proud recipient of a Lilly Award (2015) recognizing the remarkable contributions to the American Theatre made by women, the Theatre Resources Unlimited Humanitarian Award (2016), the Drama League Directors Project Musical Directing Fellowship (2011) and Beatrice Terry Fellowship for women playwright/directors (2017). BA and Graduate Certificate: UC Santa Cruz. MFA/PHD UC Riverside. More at [www.Shakina.nyc](http://www.Shakina.nyc) and [@shakeenz](https://twitter.com/shakeenz)

## ANNA K. JACOBS – Mentor, Jillian Guetersloh

ANNA K. JACOBS is a Brooklyn-based composer/lyricist and sometimes-librettist. Her musicals include *POPI!* (Yale Rep, Pittsburgh City Theatre, Studio Theatre, etc.; book & lyrics by Maggie-Kate Coleman), *HARMONY*, *KANSAS* (Diversionsary Theatre; book & lyrics by Bill Nelson), *ANYTOWN* (George Street Playhouse; book by Jim Jack), *TEETH* (Sundance; co-book & lyrics by Michael R. Jackson), *ECHO* (The Gallery Players), *STELLA AND THE MOON MAN* (Sydney Theatre Company/Theatre of Image; written by Richard Tulloch & co-composed with Adrian Kelly), and the short musicals *CAGE MATCH* and *MAGIC 8 BALL* (Prospect Theatre Company; w/ Sam Salmund & Michael R. Jackson). She also wrote music and lyrics for the soon-to-be-released *KAYA: TASTE OF PARADISE*, a movie musical commissioned by the New York Film Academy and featuring Okieriete Onaodowan (screenplay by Jerome Parker, directed by Paul Warner). Currently, she and playwright Anna Ziegler are collaborating on a new musical for Barbara Whitman Productions and Grove Entertainment that's about catfishing. Anna was recognized for her work as a composer/lyricist with the prestigious Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award. She's a former Dramatists Guild Fellow and has been an Artist in Residence at Ars Nova, New Dramatists, Goodspeed, Barrington Stage Company, and Musical Theatre Factory. Anna holds an M.F.A. in Musical Theatre Writing from NYU-Tisch and is on faculty at The New School. [www.annakjacobs.com](http://www.annakjacobs.com)

## TIDTAYA SINUTOKE – Mentor, Eliza Corrington & Braxton Carr

**Tidtaya Sinutoke** is a Thai born, NYC-based composer, writer, and musician. Her works include themes of self-discovery, gender issues, travel, social injustice and companionship. Writing credits with librettist Ty Defoe include: *Clouds Are Pillows for the Moon* (Yale Institute for Music Theatre, ASCAP Musical Theatre Workshop, Kilroy's Honorable Mention List), *Hart Island Requiem* (Civilians R&D, EtM Con Edison Composer-in-Residence), *Gender Nation*, *Crossing Borders* (CAP21 Residency), *Sunrise Prayer* (Johnny Mercer Writers Colony), *Water is Life* (NYMF, dir. by Jonathan McCrory) and *Yellow Cycle*. She is a recipient of Composer-Librettists Studio at New Dramatists, Johnny Mercer Songwriter Projects, New York Foundations for the Arts (NYFA) IAM Mentoring Program, Robert Rauschenberg Residency, EtM Con Edison Composer-in-Residence, and Jonathan Larson Grant. A proud member of ASCAP, and the Dramatists Guild. MFA: NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program. [tidtayasinutoke.com](http://tidtayasinutoke.com)

# WHO'S WHO: MENTORS/MUSIC DIRECTORS

## **MAX VERNON – Mentor, David Volpini III**

**Max Vernon** is a composer/lyricist, playwright, performer, and brooch enthusiast. Described by the *New Yorker* as "equal parts bohemia and Broadway" Max is a 2017 Out100 Honoree, and recipient of the 2018 Richard Rogers Award, Jonathan Larson Grant, New York Stage and Film's Founders Award, New York Foundation of the Arts Fellowship, and the JFund Award from the Jerome Foundation. He has been a Dramatist Guild Theatre Fellow, MacDowell Fellow, and an artist in residence at Rhinebeck Writer's Retreat and the Johnny Mercer Writers Colony. His musical, *The View UpStairs*, ran 105 performances Off-Broadway and was nominated for 2 Lortel Awards, 3 Drama Desk Awards, 4 Audelco Awards, and an Off-Broadway Alliance Award for Best New Musical. It will have 8 new productions around the world in 2017-2019; original cast recording on Broadway Records. His other musical, *KPOP*, enjoyed a sold-out, extended run at Ars Nova this past October and received 9 Lortel Award Nominations, including Best Musical. [www.maxvernon.com](http://www.maxvernon.com)

## **ANNA EBBESEN – Music Director, David Volpini III and Aaron Richert**

Anna Ebbesen, a music director and orchestrator, has made a career commitment to fostering new voices and new works in the industry. Her orchestrations can be heard on nearly twenty original movie musicals currently on the film festival circuit, including scores by Anna K. Jacobs, Zoe Sarnak, Bobby Cronin, Daniel Lincoln and Avi Amon. You can usually find her at the piano collaborating on stories that pursue fresh lenses on gender roles and the politics of our time.

## **BEN RAUHALA – Music Director, Fritz Hager III and Jillian Guetersloh**

**Benjamin Rauhala** worked on the music team for both Bartlett Sher's Broadway revival of *Fiddler on the Roof* and the Broadway production of Duncan Sheik's *American Psycho* during the 2016 season. His Off-Broadway credits include David Byrne's *Joan of Arc: Into The Fire* at The Public Theater and the current revival of *The Marvelous Wonderettes* at Theater Row. He is best known for his work touring the country as the music director for Jeremy Jordan, the Tony-nominated star of Broadway's *Newsies* and The CW's *Supergirl*. He also tours with Nashville star Kyle Dean Massey, *Trial and Error* star Krysta Rodriguez, and with *Next to Normal* Tony-nominee Jennifer Damiano. He previously served as music director for *Hit List*, the meta-musical from the NBC television show *SMASH* and is an Original Programming Producer at *Feinstein's/54 Below*, where he has created dozens of sold-out concerts, include 'The Broadway Princess Party' series with Tony-nominee Laura Osnes, and the 'Broadway Loves' Series, that has famously honored Britney Spears, Demi Lovato, Celine Dion and many more beloved pop icons. @brauhala

## **PATRICK SULKEN – Music Director, Eliza Corrington & Braxton Carr and Tucker Donelan**

Patrick Sulken is a music director and orchestrator currently serving as the Associate Music Director and Associate Conductor of *Pretty Woman: The Musical*, premiering on Broadway this summer. As a pianist and conductor, his recent credits include *Anastasia*, *Kinky Boots*, *Something Rotten!* and *Gigi* on Broadway; *Southern Comfort* (Public Theatre); *Gigantic* (Vineyard Theatre); and *Peter and the Starcatcher* (1<sup>st</sup> National Tour, Cincinnati Playhouse, Milwaukee Rep, St. Louis Rep). An avid and frequent collaborator on the development of original songs and new musicals, he has worked to this end with composers such as John Mellencamp, Stephen Schwartz, William Finn, Marcy Heisler and Zina Goldrich, Santino Fontana, Madeline Myers, and Preston Max Allen. His music direction of the world premiere of Allen's *We Are The Tigers* at the Hudson Theatre in Los Angeles was nominated for a 2016 Ovation Award/ Sulken's work as a collaborative pianist and arranger has been heard on the stages of Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, The Smithsonian, Symphony Space, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, Joe's Pub, and Feinstein's/54 Below. Initially trained as an educator at Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, Sulken enjoys engagements as a teaching artist for schools and educational organizations across the country. He is a clinician and judge of the International Competition of High School A Cappella; a coach for Musical Theatre College Auditions; and a songwriter and music director for Story Pirates, an education and media organization founded to celebrate the words and ideas of young people. For more information, visit [www.patricksulken.com](http://www.patricksulken.com) or find him online @patricksulken.

# JUDGES



## TIM FEDERLE

Tim Federle is an award-winning (and losing) screenwriter, novelist, and playwright “whose breezy wit isn’t bound to a single genre” (Huffington Post). Tim’s recent projects include co-writing the Broadway musical adaptation of Tuck Everlasting and the Golden Globe and Academy Award-nominated Best Animated Feature Ferdinand, for which he won the Humanitas Prize. His novels include the New York Times Notable Book Better Nate Than Ever and its Lambda-winning sequel. Tim’s hit series of cocktail recipe books, including Tequila Mockingbird, have sold over half a million copies worldwide. A former Broadway dancer, Tim was born in San Francisco, grew up in Pittsburgh, and now divides his time between New York and the internet (@TimFederle). He proudly serves on the boards of Rosie’s Theater Kids and the National Coalition Against Censorship, and is a nominator for the Tony Awards.



## KAMILAH FORBES

Kamilah Forbes—Director. Broadway—associate director credits include Holler if Ya Hear Me, A Raisin in the Sun, Lucky Guy, Stick Fly, The Mountaintop, Def Poetry Jam (tour). Recent directing—Detroit 67 Baltimore Center Stage; People’s Light: All My Sons; People’s Light: Fences; Arena Stage: Blood Quilt; True Colors: Detroit ’67; Labyrinth Theater Company: Sunset Baby; 651 Arts: Circle Unbroken; Kennedy Center: Nas Live from the Kennedy Center, Tribute to Marvin Gaye featuring John Legend and Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings. Ceelo Green’s Lady Killer Love story the musical (workshop); Drumline the Musical (workshop); Summer Stage: SweetBilly and the Zooloos; Other—Lincoln Center Theater, Public Theater, Lark Play Development Center, Arena Stage and Artistic Director of Hip-Hop Theater Festival. TV—credits include The Wiz Live! (associate director, NBC); HBO’s Def Poetry Jam (producer); and HBO’s Brave New Voices

(executive producer) PBS THE WOMEN’S LIST DOCUMENTARY (executive producer), PBS Nas Live from the Kennedy Center (producer) Professional—Executive Producer Apollo Theater, Kennedy Center: Curator in Residence. Education—Howard University, Oxford University.



## DARIUS DE HAAS

BROADWAY: Shuffle Along, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Rent, Carousel, Marie Christine, The Gershwin’s Fascinating Rhythm. Other credits include Children of Eden (Papermill Playhouse), Running Man (Obie Award). Once On This Island (1st National Tour), Saturn Returns (Public/NYSF), The Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin (Playwrights Horizons), I Was Looking at The Ceiling And Then I Saw The Sky, Cry The Beloved Country (Goodman Theater), Jesus in Jesus Christ Superstar- Gospel (Alliance Theater), As You Like It (Public/NYSF), and Twelfth Night (Westport Playhouse). TV/FILM: Martin & Orloff, Chicago, My Favorite Broadway: The Love Songs, The View, and numerous TODAY shows. A concert/recording artist, he has toured throughout the USA, Europe and

Asia. His recordings include Quiet Please (w/ Steven Blier), Day Dream: Variations on Strayhorn, many Original Cast recordings. [www.dariusdehaas.com](http://www.dariusdehaas.com)



## GEORGE SALAZAR

GEORGE SALAZAR can be seen off-Broadway at the Signature this summer in Joe Iconis and Joe Tracz’s Be More Chill. Broadway: Godspell (Circle in the Square). Nat’l tour: Spring Awakening (Second National). Off-Bway: The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical (Drama Desk nom.); tick, tick... BOOM! (Keen Company); Here Lies Love (Public Theater); F#%king Up Everything (Elektra Theatre). Regional: Be More Chill (Two River Theater); Broadway Bounty Hunter (Barrington Stage Company); Raging Skillet (Theaterworks Hartford); The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Bucks County Playhouse). TV: “BULL” (CBS); Divorce” (HBO). Recordings: Be More Chill; The Lightning Thief; Godspell: Brooklyn Crush; Moment by Moment. For more info, visit [www.thegeorgesalazar.com](http://www.thegeorgesalazar.com). @georgesalazar



## AMANDA GREEN

Amanda is a two-time Tony-Award nominated lyricist-composer. She is currently writing lyrics for a new musical, collaborating with Billy Crystal and Jason Robert Brown. Broadway: On The Twentieth Century Revival starring Kristin Chenoweth (Add’l Lyrics); Bring It On, Co-Lyricist, w/ Lin Manuel Miranda; Nominated for Tony Award Best Musical, Drama Desk Award, Lyrics. Hands On A Hardbody, Lyrics, Co-Composer with Trey Anastasio; Tony Award, Outer Critics Circle Award and 2 Drama Desk Award Nominations (Music & Lyrics.) Frederic Loewe Composition Award (first female winner); High Fidelity (Lyrics) TV: Peter Pan Live! NBC (2014; Add’l Lyrics). Also: Jonathan Larson Award; Council Member, The Dramatists Guild, Board Member, The Lilly Awards Foundation, working for parity for women in theatre.

# WHO'S WHO: PARTNERS



Established by Congress in 1965, the **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their

creative capacities. Jane Chu is the 11th chairman of the NEA and has led the agency since 2014. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the NEA supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit [arts.gov](http://arts.gov) to learn more about the NEA. Since 1966, the NEA has awarded \$346 million through our theater and musical theater programs, offering grants for the production or presentation of traditional or classical repertoire, new plays and musicals, development laboratories, showcases, artist residencies, work for young audiences, experimental work, community-based work, outdoor historical dramas, and puppetry. In 2017 alone, theater and musical theater grants totaled \$7.4 million. In addition to the Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge, the NEA has worked extensively to create opportunities for deaf theater artists. A roundtable convened in January 2016 is posted on the NEA website in the publications section. A recent issue of the NEA's quarterly magazine, *NEA Arts*, was devoted to what it takes to mount a musical, looking at Signature Theatre's (in Virginia) production of *Crazy For You*. And in 2016, the National Endowment for the Arts had the great honor to receive a Tony Award for its "unwavering commitment in paving the road" between Broadway and cities throughout the U.S.



## AMERICAN THEATRE WING

We envision an American Theatre that is as vital, multi-faceted, and diverse as the American people. The Wing's programs span the nation to invest in the growth and evolution of American Theatre. We provide theatre education opportunities for underserved students through the Andrew Lloyd Webber Initiative, develop the next generation of theatre professionals through the SpringboardNYC and Theatre Intern Network programs, incubate innovative theatre across the country through the National Theatre Company Grants, foster the song of American Theatre through the Jonathan Larson® Grants, honor the best in New York theatrical design with the Henry Hewes Design Award, and illuminate the creative process through the Emmy-nominated "Working in the Theatre" documentary series. In addition to founding the Tony Awards® which are co-presented with The Broadway League, the American Theatre Wing co-presents the Obie Awards®, Off Broadway's Highest Honor, with *The Village Voice*.

Visitors to [AmericanTheatreWing.org](http://AmericanTheatreWing.org) can gain inspiration and insight into the artistic process through the Wing's extensive media collection, and learn more about its programming for students, aspiring and working professionals, and audiences. Follow the Wing on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @TheWing, and on [Facebook.com/AmericanTheatreWing](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanTheatreWing).

# WHO'S WHO: PARTNERS

## PLAYBILL

Founded in 1884, **PLAYBILL** is an internationally known trademark that is synonymous with theatre and is a symbol of the arts. Playbill Magazine proudly serves every Broadway house as well as the country's most prestigious fine arts

institutions, including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center. In 2018 Playbill presses will roll out 3.5 million programs monthly for nearly 150 theatres in 24 cities. Playbill.com debuted in 1994, leveraging our 110-year legacy to become the leading source of theatre information on the web. In 2013, PLAYBILLder.com was launched to provide schools, community, and amateur theatre companies, the opportunity to easily accomplish the difficult task of creating and publishing customized Playbills and marketing materials. For the 2017 school year, roughly 1.5 million PLAYBILLders were in circulation within the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Hong Kong. PLAYBILLder has also served as the official Playbill for every live musical featured on NBC and FOX for the last four years. Visit [PLAYBILLder.com](http://PLAYBILLder.com) for more information.



**Disney Theatrical Productions (DTP)** operates under the direction of Thomas Schumacher and is among the world's most successful commercial theatre enterprises, bringing live entertainment events to a global annual audience of more than 20 million people in more than 50

countries. Under the Disney Theatrical Productions banner, the group produces and licenses Broadway productions around the world, including *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, Elton John & Tim Rice's *Aida*, *TARZAN®*, *Mary Poppins*, a co-production with Cameron Mackintosh, *The Little Mermaid*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Newsies*, *Aladdin*, and *Frozen*. Other successful stage musical ventures have included the Olivier-nominated London hit *Shakespeare in Love*, stage productions of Disney's *High School Musical*, *Der Glöckner Von Notre Dame* in Berlin, and *King David* in concert. DTP has collaborated with the country's leading regional theatres to develop new stage titles including *The Jungle Book*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Freaky Friday*.



**Samuel French** is the world's leading publisher and licensor of plays and musicals. The company's catalog features some of the most acclaimed work ever written for the stage as well as titles by writers, composers and lyricists at the forefront of contemporary drama and musical theatre. Samuel French is proud to have served as a leader

in theatrical publishing and licensing for over 180 years and is committed to the future by championing artists, innovating the industry, and celebrating all those who make theatre happen around the world.

# WHO'S WHO: PARTNERS



Founded in 1917, the **National Music Publishers' Association (NMPA)** is the trade association representing all American music publishers and their songwriting partners. Its mission is to protect, promote, and advance the interests of music's creators. The NMPA is the voice of both small and large music publishers, and is the leading advocate for publishers and their songwriter partners in the nation's capital and in every area where publishers do business. The

goal of NMPA is to protect its members' property rights on the legislative, litigation, and regulatory fronts. In this vein, the NMPA continues to represent its members in negotiations to shape the future of the music industry by fostering a business environment that furthers both creative and financial success. The NMPA has remained the most active and vocal proponent for the interests of music publishers in the U.S. and throughout the world, a continuing tradition of which the association is very proud. Launched in 2015, the NMPA SONGS Foundation promotes the creation of music by supporting gifted songwriters and programs that foster composition education. The Foundation's goal is to provide financial assistance and support of educational programs to assist talented writers to ensure they can continue their creativity. It is a 501(c)3 corporation. For more information, go to the SONGS Foundation website.

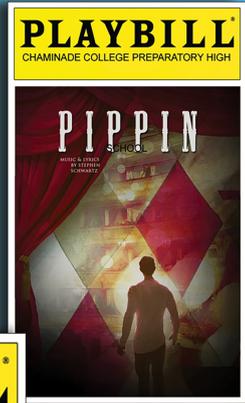
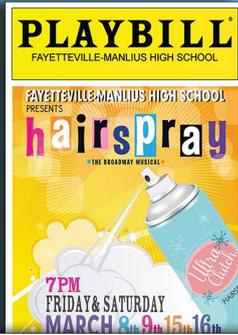
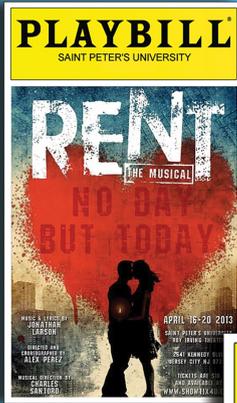


Celebrating 78 years of service to songwriters, composers, publishers and businesses, **BMI** is a global leader in music rights management, serving as an advocate for the value of music. BMI represents the public performance rights in nearly 13 million musical works created and owned by more than 800,000 songwriters, composers, and publishers. BMI negotiates music license agreements and distributes the fees it generates as royalties to its affiliated writers and publishers when their songs

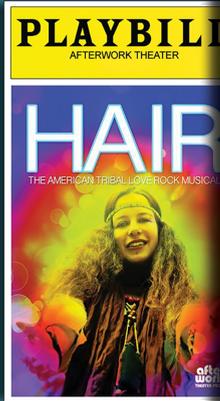
are performed in public. In 1939, BMI created a groundbreaking open-door policy becoming the only performing rights organization to welcome and represent the creators of blues, jazz, country, and American roots music. Today, BMI's repertoire spans all genres of music and consistently boasts many of the most-performed hits of the year.



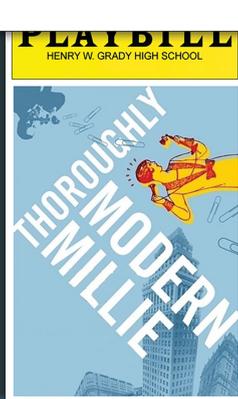
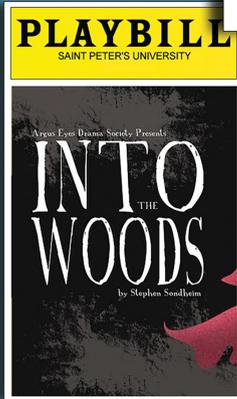
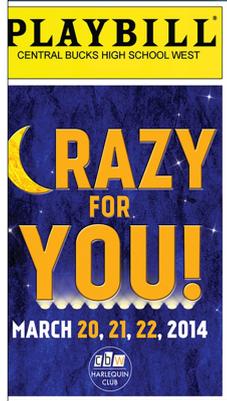
**The Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF)** raises awareness and funds for critical health, educational and social issues by harnessing the collective power of the entertainment community. EIF creates high-profile programs and events that address social issues and urgent needs, as well as inform, inspire and raise significant funds for sustainable initiatives that can stimulate innovation and transform lives. With the commitment of their supporters, individuals and corporations, EIF is able to champion a wide variety of worthy causes. Visit [eifoundation.org](http://eifoundation.org) and follow @eifoundation



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