

N E W S R E L E A S E

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**THE THEATRE SCHOOL PRESENTS FREE PERFORMANCES OF
WILLIAM FINN'S MUSICAL A NEW BRAIN NOVEMBER 11 – 20**

The Theatre School at DePaul University presents **A NEW BRAIN**, music and lyrics by William Finn, book by William Finn and James Lapine, directed by Betsy Hamilton with musical direction by Mark Elliott. The play opens Friday, November 11 and runs through Sunday, November 20, 2005 (previews 11/9 & 11/10) at the Athenaeum Studio Three, 2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago. Performances are Wednesday through Saturday at 7:30 PM and Sunday at 2 PM. Admission is FREE but reservations are recommended; call the Box Office at (312) 922-1999.

Tony-Award winner William Finn's own medical misdiagnosis was the basis for this play that was hailed by the *Chicago Tribune* as "a tuneful and highly entertaining musical with a relentlessly optimistic spirit." Gordon, under stress from his job, collapses and is diagnosed with a rare brain tumor. During his stay in the hospital he is visited by an odd assortment of characters, helping him discover the healing power of art. The play runs approximately 90 minutes.

Performances are at the Athenaeum Studio Three, 2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago. The Athenaeum offers some street and paid lot parking and is accessible via public transportation.

SPECIAL EVENT: A post-show discussion with the cast is scheduled on Thursday, November 17.

Production staff includes **Betsy Hamilton** (Director), **Mark Elliott** (Musical Director), **Ron Seeley** (Scenic Design), **Christine Conley** (Costume Design), **Julie J. Wilms** (Lighting Design), **Matthew Didier** (Dramaturg) and **Samantha Flint** (Stage Manager).

The cast includes **Sara Anderson** (Nancy D.), **Talon Beeson** (Dr. Jafar Berensteiner), **Briana DeGiulio** (The Minister/Waitress), **Emily Brooks** (Mimi Schwinn), **Laura Mahler** (Rhoda), **Jonathan McGinley** (Gordon Michael Schwinn), **Tawny Ellain Newsome** (Lisa), **Brandon Anthony Prather** (Roger Delli-Bovi), **Erron Jay** (Richard), and **Jeremy Young** (Mr. Bungee).

William Finn (Composer/Lyricist/Book) is the writer and composer of *FALSETTOS* (two Tony Awards), *IN TROUSERS*, *MARCH OF THE FALSETTOS* and *FALSETTOLAND* (Outer Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, two Los Angeles Drama Critics Awards, two Drama Desk Awards, the Lucille Lortel Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship in Playwriting). His other credits include *TANGO APASIONADO*, *THE WINTER'S TALE* and *ROMANCE IN HARD TIMES*. He is presently working on the music and lyrics for *THE ROYAL FAMILY OF BROADWAY*.

James Lapine (Book) has worked in one capacity or another with William Finn on *MARCH OF THE FALSETTOS* and *FALSETTOLAND* (later presented on Broadway as *FALSETTOS*), *A NEW BRAIN*, *A WINTER'S TALE* and the upcoming *MUSCLE* and *THE ROYAL FAMILY OF BROADWAY*. His numerous Broadway credits include *SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE*, *INTO THE WOODS*, *PASSION* and *THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK*, among others. Off-Broadway credits include *TABLE SETTINGS; A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM; LUCK, PLUCK AND VIRTUE*; and *MODERN ORTHODOX*. Film credits include *IMPROMPTU*, *LIFE WITH MIKEY* and *EARTHLY POSSESSIONS*.

After graduating from the University of Texas, **Betsy Hamilton** (Director) received her advanced degree from The Mary Wigman School of Dance in Berlin. She has studied gymnastic techniques at the School for the Circus and the art of mime with Monsieurs Becroux and Lecoq in Paris. She is a certified Feldenkrais Practitioner®. As a professional director and choreographer, her credits include nine seasons with the Utah Shakespearean Festival, the Oregon Shakespearean Festival and Writers' Theatre. Recent Theatre School credits include *ASSASSINS*, *SAINT JOAN OF THE STOCKYARDS*, *NOISES OFF!*, *MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG*, *TINTYPES* and *THE LITTLE PRINCE*.

Mark Elliott (Musical Director) has provided musical direction for nearly 100 productions in theatres throughout Chicago and around the country. He is the composer-in-residence at The Theatre School and has served several times as musical director for Chicago's annual Joseph Jefferson Awards and Citations. He has composed original scores and incidental music for nearly 50 productions, including the Off-Broadway production of *SOPHIE, TOTIE AND BELLE* and *FAIR CITY*. A series of harp pieces, *RHYME OR TREASON*, is published by Lyon & Healy.

The Theatre School at DePaul University educates, trains and inspires students of theatre in a conservatory setting that is rigorous, disciplined, culturally diverse and that strives for the highest level of professional skill and artistry. A commitment to diversity and equality in education is central to the school's mission. As an integral part of the training, The Theatre School produces public programs and performances from a wide repertoire of classic, contemporary and original plays that challenge, entertain and stimulate the imagination.