



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

VILLAGE THEATRE—KNOWN FOR EARLY WORK ON AWARD-WINNER *NEXT TO NORMAL*—ANNOUNCES NEW MUSICAL FEST LINE-UP

6 New Musicals Get Renowned Village Originals Treatment in 11th Annual Festival of New Musicals

Issaquah, Wash. – Village Theatre announces the official selections of the Village Originals 11th Annual Festival of New Musicals, taking place August 12-14, 2011 at the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre in Issaquah, Wash. **This is an invitation-only event*.**

Village Originals is Village Theatre's nationally renowned new musical development program, and the Festival of New Musicals is the annual event that launches a hand-full of fledgling musicals into the musical landscape. Leading writers and producers from across the county will come together to be part of the new musical development process alongside Village Theatre's specially chosen team of creators, musicians, and actors.

"We choose our production staff and creative teams for the Festival much like how we handle choosing particular individuals for our Mainstage productions," Steve Tomkins, Village Theatre artistic director comments. "Incredible thought and discussion go into the process of whom and what makes a great team for these new musicals. We're thrilled with the interest in our program from around the country and we continue to steadily increase what we are capable of through Village Originals. This is the stuff we live for; we love developing new musicals at Village Theatre!"

Of the Festival in 2010, Misha Berson with *The Seattle Times* reported, "For anybody crafting a show aimed at Broadway (or Off Broadway, or the U.S. regional theater circuit), getting it showcased in the annual Village Originals festival at Village Theatre in Issaquah is a real plum." The Village Originals program was truly propelled into the limelight when two of the new musicals whose early development was fostered in the program were awarded the highest of honors. In 2009, the new musical *Next To Normal* (developed through Village Originals in 2002 and 2005—formerly titled *Feeling Electric*) was awarded several Tony Awards and in 2010, the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The following year, the Broadway smash—and Mainstage sales-record-breaker—*Million Dollar Quartet* (developed through Village Originals in 2006) was nominated in several Tony Award categories. Ultimately, Levi Kreis (seen in Village Theatre's Village Originals reading and the Mainstage production) took home the honor for best supporting actor.

The Festival of New Musicals also offers attendees a first look at potential upcoming Village Theatre Mainstage shows. Past Festivals have included shows that go on to be seen on Village Theatre's Mainstage such as *Anne of Green Gables*, *Little Women*, *Iron Curtain*, *Chasing Nicolette*, *The Gypsy King*, and *Stunt Girl*, as well as the upcoming 2011-2012 Season's *Take Me America* and *It Shoulda Been You*.

*This year, the Annual Festival features five new musicals in reading format—fully sung with script in hand—including: *The Giver*, *Sundays at Tiffany's*, *Trails*, *Lizzie Borden*, and *Hello! My Baby*. This portion of the Festival is invite-only. For the first time, the Festival also boasts a developmental production of the new musical *Cloaked*—a fully realized production with sets, costumes, lighting, and sound—last seen by Village Originals audiences at the 10th Annual Festival of New Musicals. *Cloaked* runs August 12-21, 2011; tickets can be purchased via the Village Theatre Box Office, (425) 392-2202.

Below please find a detailed list of this year's Festival musical line-up:

THE GIVER

Book and Lyrics by Nathan Christensen

Music by Scott Murphy

Based on the the Newberry Award-winning novel by Lois Lowry

The Giver was given a two-week developmental workshop by TheatreworksUSA in 2006, followed by an additional week of developmental work in 2007. In 2010, the musical was part of the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's 22nd Annual Festival of New Musicals. Bookwriter/lyricist Nathan Christensen received his BA in theater from BYU, and an MFA in musical theater writing from NYU. With composer Scott Murphy, he has received a Jonathan Larson Award, a Richard Rodgers Award, a Daryl Roth Award, and a Dramatists Guild Fellowship.

Synopsis:

This stirring new musical, based on Lois Lowry's much-loved novel, *The Giver*, reveals a glimpse of a colorless world without pain, sickness, or conflict, in which human contact is discouraged and love is a word neither understood nor spoken. Amidst robotically content inhabitants, a boy emerges with the capacity to see and feel much more than his society allows. Accompanied by haunting melodies and poetically layered vocals, his struggle to reconcile his new found emotions with a world that ignores them reminds us that maybe life is only real when it's raw.

SUNDAYS AT TIFFANY'S

Book and Lyrics by Susan DiLallo

Music by Fred Thaler

Village Theatre veteran, bookwriter Susan DiLallo—the 2008 Jonathan Larsen Award-winner— returns to the Village Originals program with her latest project, *Sundays at Tiffany's*. Susan's work was last seen on the Village Theatre Mainstage with the 2010 production of *Iron Curtain* (developed in the Village Originals program in 2007 and 2008) and the 2007 production of *Once Upon A Time in New Jersey* (developed in the Village Originals program in 2004). *Sundays at Tiffany's* is based on the James Patterson novel.

Synopsis:

Step into the life of nine-year-old Jane, where her only escape from the shadow of her extravagant and successful mother is her not-so-imaginary friend, Michael. Despite Michael's early attempt to give Jane a healthy childhood, he finds her 20 years later still struggling against her mother's manipulative grasp, and drowning in the false promises of a fair-weather boyfriend. With fast-paced Manhattan as its backdrop and a cheeky big band score leading the way, this new musical tells a tale of friendship, fidelity, and showbiz, all the while reminding us that true love has the power to shock your senses and transform your soul.

HELLO! MY BABY

Book and New Lyrics by Cheri Steinkellner

New Music and Arrangements by Georgia Stitt

Hello! My Baby is written by the Emmy Award-winning writer of "Cheers" and the West End and Broadway smash hit production of *Sister Act*, Cheri Steinkellner, with musical arrangements and additional music by composer and a lyricist Georgia Stitt. The show chronicles the beginnings of that original all-American art-form: Popular Music. A new take on the classic songbook musical, this show updates the greatest hits of Berlin, Gershwin, Kern, Cohan, and a score of others. This new musical was featured at the Goodspeed Musical Festival in 2011.

Synopsis:

Get ready to tap your toes and snap your fingers to a catchy ragtime score as this new musical takes you on a whirlwind ride through the classic American songbook. Follow Nelly and Mickey down the tenement lined streets of the lower east side, and into a world where neighbors are nosy, making rent is a struggle, and music is the business to be in! From cross-dressing to fleeing the local gangster, they find that talent takes a backseat to a little luck, a little pluck, and a lot of heart.

LIZZIE BORDEN

By Steven Cheslik-deMeyer, Tim Maner, and Alan Stevens Hewitt

An early version of *Lizzie Borden* was seen at the Ohio Theatre, produced by Tiny Mythic Theatre Company, followed by a full production at HERE. In 2006, the show was expanded into a full-length, two-act musical, which premiered at the Living Theatre in 2009. This production was named in *The Advocate's* "Top Ten of 2009" and was nominated for three Drama Desk Awards. Steven Cheslik-deMeyer has worked as a writer, composer, and filmmaker for three decades; Tim Maner has written, directed, musical directed, and produced over 20 original music/theater works including *Frankenstein* with composer Steven Cheslik-deMeyer; Alan Stevens Hewitt was the original bass player in the Broadway production and 1st National Tour of *Spring Awakening*.

Synopsis:

Long before Joan Jett, Lizzie Borden was the ultimate axe wielding rebel girl, who garnered fame, fortune, and two dead parents, all without a scratch on her criminal record. In this gripping new musical, a powerfully passionate rock score leads us deep into the darkness of the Borden house and gives us a glimpse of the silent suffering endured by its female residents. Though the tale of Lizzie's dastardly deed is over a hundred years old, this production sheds light on a new angle, one that leaves us amazed by the limits of a desperate young woman with the strength to slaughter and the guile to get away with it.

TRAILS

Book by Christy Hall

Lyrics by Jordan Mann

Music by Jeff Thomson

In 2008, the songwriting team behind this new musical received the Jonathan Larson Performing Arts Foundation Grant, and was 2006-2007 Dramatists Guild Musical Theatre Writing Fellows. Their songs have been featured in the acclaimed "Songbook" series at Lincoln Center, The York Theatre Company's N.E.O Concert Series, and Scott Alan's Monday Night New Voices programs in Chicago and New York. *Trails* won the award for Outstanding Music and Runner-Up for Best Lyrics at the 2010 NY Musical Theatre Festival (NYMF). *Trails* received the New World Stages Development Award in April 2011, a staged workshop presentation at the Festival of New American Musicals in Los Angeles, and a developmental workshop presentation at Millikin University's New Musicals Initiative in 2009.

Synopsis:

With love, loss, and 34 years behind them, two childhood buddies embark on a perilous adventure that will test their strength and stamina, but most of all their friendship. As they set out to hike the entire 2,000-mile Appalachian Trail, Mike and Seth find that Mother Nature isn't the only woman between them and their future. With enchanting melodies and inspiring lyrics, this new musical wrestles with the concept of the elusive American Dream, but leaves us certain that time, love, and nature will never pay attention to your plans.

CLOAKED

Music and Lyrics by Danny Larsen

Book and Lyrics by Michelle Elliott

Written by award-winning authors Danny Larsen (composer/co-lyricist) and Michelle Elliot (book/co-lyricist), *Cloaked* was last seen by Village Originals audiences at the Annual Festival of New Musicals in 2010 where it received rave audience reviews. Elliot recently won the prestigious Kleban Prize as librettist for *Cloaked*, and together the team was also recently awarded the Jonathan Larson Award, an honor and financial support for further development. This team brought their first collaboration together, the new musical *The Yellow Wood* (2006 Richard Rodgers Development Award, 2006 Daryl Roth Award, 2007 New York Musical Theatre Festival Excellence in Music Award) to the Village Originals 8th Annual Festival of New Musicals in 2008.

Synopsis:

In this tantalizing tale, two people venture into the wilderness of the internet in search of a human connection—but what happens when reason falls away and you lose yourself in the fantasy? This potent new musical reveals the hidden desires and darkness of the human heart and the all-consuming-power they can hold. With a modern, innovative score that blends computerized tones and haunting melodies, this spine-tingling psychological thriller is both alluring and suspenseful.

Festival Schedule: Find [complete Festival schedule here](#).

Village Theatre: Based in Issaquah, WA, with operations in Everett, Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theatre in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining quality productions for the entire family since 1979, Village Theatre has grown into one of the region's best-attended Equity theatres, with over 18,000 Subscribers and 182,000 projected total attendance each season. Through its Village Originals program, Village Theatre is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having launched over 95 new works to date. Village Theatre also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its youth education programs, Pied Piper and KIDSTAGE, serving over 54,000 young people, families, and schools annually. For more information, visit <http://www.villagetheatre.org> and follow us [@TheVillageVault](#)

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