



NEWS RELEASE

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[EDITORS PLEASE NOTE: Members of the Press are invited to all seminars, showcases, cabarets, symposia and work sessions. All events except rehearsals are available to the general public. For press reservations, please contact Elisa Hale at 860.873.8664, ext. 323 or [Elisa.Hale@goodspeed.org](mailto:Elisa.Hale@goodspeed.org).]

*DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO SEE THE NEXT BIG HIT!*

## GOODSPEED'S 15th ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF NEW MUSICALS

*January 17-19: Staged readings of three brand-new musicals plus several special events celebrating the best and brightest in musical theatre from across the nation*

EAST HADDAM, CONN., DECEMBER 13, 2019: Come in from the cold and check out what's hot at the **15th Annual Goodspeed Festival of New Musicals**, produced by **Goodspeed Musicals' Max Showalter Center for Education in Musical Theatre**. The much-anticipated three-day festival of brand-new works kicks off on Friday, January 17 at The Goodspeed with a staged reading of *The Tattooed Lady*. This bold and empowering new tuner features a book by **Erin Courtney** and **Max Vernon** and music and lyrics by Max Vernon. Saturday, January 18 will be highlighted by a staged reading of the innovative and powerful new musical *Private Gomer*, written by **Marshall Paillet**. The final day of the festival features the "high-ly" entertaining *Grow* with book by **Matt Murray**, music by **Colleen Dauncey** and lyrics by **Akiva Romer-Segal**. Additional Festival events, including seminars, symposiums and exclusive cabarets, will round out this exciting weekend. Single tickets are \$25 for each staged reading, \$15 each for students. Single show tickets and Festival packages are available through the Goodspeed Box Office 860.873.8668 or online at [www.goodspeed.org](http://www.goodspeed.org). This year's Festival is sponsored in part by lead corporate sponsor RisCassi & Davis, P.C. with support from the Burry Fredrik Foundation, the Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, Sheridan College and Webster Private Bank.

Goodspeed's ever-popular Festival **GOLD Package** will offer patrons a weekend full of special events. The \$149 package includes admission to all three staged readings; three Festival seminar sessions; two Festival Symposiums; a Saturday evening pre-show dinner at either the Gelston House or La Vita; and a Meet the Writers Q&A, which will complete the weekend's festivities. Also included in the Festival GOLD Package is admittance to either the Friday Night or Saturday Night Cabarets – informal gatherings showcasing new songs by new and established artists. A special **SILVER Package** highlighting the three staged readings, both Festival Symposiums and the Meet the Writers Q&A is also available for only \$80.

"This winter we are thrilled to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Festival of New Musicals – one of the cornerstones of Goodspeed's new works development program and the source of countless hours of discovery and entertainment for our new works audience," said Goodspeed's Executive Director Michael Gennaro. "The village of East Haddam will be filled with vitality and exhilaration as hundreds of musical theatre fans from across the country come together to celebrate Goodspeed and the best and brightest writers and performers in musical theatre," he added.

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Information about the three staged readings and the schedule of special events for Festival Package holders includes:

### **Friday, January 17** ***The Tattooed Lady*** **7:30 p.m., *The Goodspeed***

Book by **Erin Courtney** and **Max Vernon**  
Music and Lyrics by Max Vernon

Following the death of her husband, Ida, a seventy-eight year old Tattooed Lady and former star of a 1920's Freak show, is faced with two choices: move into her daughter's home, or find the courage to confront her past and return to the stage one last time. And if the ghosts of eight Tattooed Ladies have anything to say about it...it will be the latter. A musical that shatters taboos, *The Tattooed Lady* explores a woman's right to control her body and choose her own destiny.

### **Festival Cabaret** **10:00 p.m., *Gelston House***

**Grace McLean** featuring special guest **Jonathan Brielle**

**Grace McLean** is a multi-hyphenate actress-singer-writer-teacher on the rise. In addition to performing (*Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812*), Grace also makes time for her acclaimed original music, both as a solo artist and with her band Grace McLean & Them Apples. Grace is a Writer in Residence at Lincoln Center and a 2018 MacDowell Colony Fellow and has developed work at CAP21, SPACE on Ryder Farm, The Orchard Project and Johnny Mercer Writer's Colony at Goodspeed.

**Jonathan Brielle** wrote the music and lyrics for *Foxfire* with **Jessica Tandy** (Tony Award) **Hume Cronyn**, and **Keith Carradine**; *Himself and Nora* (book, music, lyrics); *Nightmare Alley* (book, music, lyrics); *40 Naked Women, A Monkey and Me* (book, music, lyrics); *Enter The Night* (book, music, lyrics); *MadHattan* (book, music, lyrics); *Rugrats, Live!* (Executive Music Supervisor); *Goosebumps, Live!* (Producer, Music.) Jonathan is the Executive Vice President of the Johnny Mercer Foundation and a Writer/Producer in Residence of the Johnny Mercer Writers' Colony at Goodspeed Musicals.

## **Saturday, January 18**

### **Seminars** **10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., *Gelston House / La Vita***

#### **Drama Nerd: *Anne of Green Gables***

Goodspeed's Artistic Associate **Anika Chapin** leads a deep dive discussion with **Matte O'Brien** and **Matt Vinson** about their new musical *Anne of Green Gables*, set for the summer of 2020 at The Goodspeed.

**From Downtown to Uptown:** Producer **Nancy Gibbs** chats about her prolific career as an accomplished producer shepherding shows from non-profits to Broadway.

**What's the Buzz? The New and Distinct Voices of Musical Theater:** The Producing Director of Musical Theatre Factory, **Mei Ann Teo**, examines the promising new writers and trends at the cutting edge of musical theatre development.

**Exit Interview:** A retrospective conversation with Goodspeed Musicals' departing Resident Music Director **Michael O'Flaherty** on his time at Goodspeed and the ever-evolving landscape of musical theatre.

ADDITIONAL SEMINARS TBA

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**\*Symposium I: *The Festival at 15: Fostering the Future***  
**3:00 p.m., The Goodspeed**

To celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Festival of New Musicals, we'll take a look back and reflect on the journey of the Festival and Goodspeed's dedication to fostering the future of musical theatre.

**\*Symposium II: *New Vision for New Works – The Terris Theatre in 2020***  
**4:00 p.m., The Goodspeed**

Goodspeed Executive Director **Michael Gennaro** shares an exclusive introduction to the exciting new musicals headed to Goodspeed's Terris Theatre in 2020.

**\*These events are free and open to the public.**

**Festival Dinner**  
**5:30 p.m., Gelston House - OR - La Vita**  
Enjoy a three course meal with fellow festival goers.

***Private Gomer***  
**7:30 p.m., The Goodspeed**

Book, Music and Lyrics by **Marshall Paillet**

*Private Gomer* tells the story of a young WWI soldier who has suffered profound hearing loss. Hiding his deafness, Gomer displays remarkable skill as a sniper— skill which carries him from his home in Wales to the Western front. As he bonds with the colorful characters in his unit, he must face the brutality of war and wrestle with the nature of violence. *Private Gomer* was conceived at the Johnny Mercer Writer's Colony.

**Festival Cabaret**  
**10:00 p.m., Gelston House**

***It's the Bear*** featuring special guest **Jonathan Brielle**

Six co-workers take a team-building retreat to Bear Mountain to sort out workplace tensions. Soon, the co-workers are picked off one by one by an unseen killer; the boss must lead her remaining employees to safety. Will they survive their interpersonal drama and this mysterious murderer? *It's the Bear* is a cautionary tale is told by a folksy band of merry woodland creatures led by a squirrel.

**Sunday, January 19**

***Grow***  
**1:00 p.m., The Goodspeed**

Book by **Matt Murray**  
Music by **Colleen Dauncey**  
Lyrics by **Akiva Romer-Segal**

Before they are baptized into their faith forever, twin sisters Hannah and Ruth go on Rumspringa – the ancient rite of passage for Amish teenagers to explore the modern world. But when the girls find themselves stranded in a scary Toronto neighborhood, their beliefs are tested as they team up with a down-on-his-luck marijuana dealer to run his grow-op. *Grow* is an outrageously fun, big-hearted musical that examines sisterhood, community and the new horizons that await us all.

**Meet the Writers Reception**

**3:30 p.m., *The Goodspeed***

Gain insight into the inspirations and processes of the writers during this lively festival wrap-up discussion.

Lodging and dining information for Festival attendees as well as up-to-date information on the weekend's events can be found at [www.goodspeed.org](http://www.goodspeed.org)

The Festival of New Musicals is produced by Goodspeed Musicals' Max Showalter for Education in Musical Theatre. Created in 2002, Goodspeed's Showalter Center inspires and nurtures musical theatre artists and students by providing a unique and comprehensive range of training and educational programs to serve both the national and local academic communities. The Goodspeed Festival program offers new and established artists the rare opportunity to thoroughly work on their projects with the help of Goodspeed's renowned resources and artistic environment. At the same time, the Festival affords senior students from prominent conservatory programs real-world experience in new musical development and performing new musicals.

Preparations for the Festival begin the second week of January. The three teams of writers and composers dedicate their time to further writing and composing their musicals in development. They are joined by musical theater students from The Hartt School and Boston Conservatory, who take part in rehearsals and continued development of the material. The intensive retreat culminates with Goodspeed's Festival of New Musicals, which showcases staged readings of the new musicals developed during the two-week long program, one of the Showalter Center's major endeavors.

Under the leadership of Executive Director, Michael Gennaro, Goodspeed Musicals is dedicated to the preservation, development and advancement of musical theatre and is the first theatre in the nation to receive two Tony Awards (for outstanding achievement). Goodspeed produces three musicals each season at The Goodspeed in East Haddam, Conn., and additional productions at The Terris Theatre in Chester, Conn., which was opened in 1984 for the development of new musicals. Goodspeed also maintains The Scherer Library of Musical Theatre and The Max Showalter Center for Education in Musical Theatre. Goodspeed gratefully acknowledges the support from the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts.

**[FOR BIOS SEE "ABOUT THE WRITERS" INCLUDED BELOW]**

For more information, to schedule an interview, or to receive stock art, please contact  
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## ABOUT THE WRITERS

### **The Tattooed Lady**

Book by Eric Courtney and Max Vernon

Music and Lyrics by Max Vernon

**Erin Courtney** (Book) Erin's play **A Map of Virtue**, produced by 13P and directed by **Ken Rus Schmoll**, was awarded an Obie and described as "one of the most terrifying plays of the past decade" by **Alexis Soloski** in the New York Times. *A Map of Virtue* was nominated for a GLAAD award and has had numerous productions across the country. Her play **I Will Be Gone**, directed by **Kip Fagan**, premiered at Actors Theater of Louisville, Humana Festival in 2015. She is writing a new play, **Ann, Fran, Mary Ann** which is a Playwrights Horizons commission. She has written two operas with **Elizabeth Swados**, **The Nomad** and **Kaspar Hauser**: both were commissioned and produced by The Flea Theater. The musical *The Tattooed Lady* that she is co-writing with composer and lyricist Max Vernon has been developed with support from The Rhinebeck Writer's Retreat, the Kimmel Center and Joe's Pub at the Public. Her other plays, produced by Clubbed Thumb, include **Alice the Magnet**, directed by **Pam MacKinnon**, and **Demon Baby**, directed by Ken Rus Schmoll. She is an affiliated artist with Clubbed Thumb, a member of the Obie award winning playwright collective -13P, as well as the co-founder of the Brooklyn Writer's Space. She earned her MFA in playwriting at Brooklyn College with **Mac Wellman**, and her BA from Brown University where she studied with **Paula Vogel**. She is a member of New Dramatists since 2012, a MacDowell Colony fellow, a Core Writer at the Playwrights' Center, a member of the Working Farm at Space on Ryder Farm and she was awarded a Guggenheim in 2013. She is an Assistant Professor at Brooklyn College and is the program coordinator of the MFA Playwriting Program. Instagram: @erin\_brooklyn718

**Max Vernon** (Book, Music & Lyrics) is a three-time Drama Desk nominee, Out100 Honoree, and recipient of the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical, Richard Rodgers 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. They have been a Dramatist Guild Theatre Fellow, MacDowell Fellow, and an artist in residence at Berkeley Rep, Ars Nova, Kimmel Center (viaThe Public Theater), Disney Creative Entertainment, and Rhinebeck Writer's Retreat, among others. Their musical, **The View UpStairs**, ran 105 performances Off-Broadway and will have sixteen new productions around the world in 2017-2019; original cast recording on Broadway Records. Their other musical, **KPOP**, enjoyed a sold-out, extended run at Ars Nova this past October and was the most nominated Off-Broadway show of the 2017-2018 season. Max is also an acclaimed cabaret artist. Notable concert performances include a sold out six month residency at Joe's Pub of the Public Theater ("Existential Life Crisis Lullaby"), Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. [www.maxvernon.com](http://www.maxvernon.com)

Instagram: @frauleinsallybowels

Twitter: @maxvernon

### **Private Gomer**

Book, Music and Lyrics by Marshall Paillet

**Marshall Paillet** (Book, Music & Lyrics) is a writer and director for theater and animated films, and is the proud owner of a poorly trained but ultimately well-meaning terrier mix. He directed, composed, and co-wrote the Off Broadway musicals **Who's Your Baghdaddy** (New York Times Critics' Pick) and **Triassic Parq** (Ovation Award, Best Musical). Other selected work: **Claudio Quest** (winner of six NYMF Awards for Excellence); **Hershey's Unwrapped** (2019 Brass Award Winner); **Shrek the Halls** (DreamWorks Theatricals); **The Magic School Bus** (TheaterWorks USA); **PBS Kids Live** (PBS Kids); **The Chocolate Tree** (NAMT). Film: *VeggieTales: Noah's Ark* starring **Wayne Brady** (Original Songs). His upcoming musical, **Loch Ness**, had recent productions at The Rev and ATF. Some other directing credits include **Nikola Tesla Drops the Beat** (Alchemation), and **Wonderland** (Atlantic Theater Company). Graduate Yale University. [www.marshallpaillet.com](http://www.marshallpaillet.com)

## Grow

Music by Colleen Dauncey

Lyrics by Akiva Romer-Segal

Book by Matt Murray

**Colleen Dauncey** (Music) and **Akiva Romer-Segal** (Lyrics) are a Canadian contemporary musical theatre songwriting team. They have penned the scores to **Going Under** (Bravo Academy), **Offline** (Talk Is Free Theatre), Toronto Fringe hit **Bremen Rock City** (with librettist **Sara Farb**), and contributed material to **Touch Me: Songs for a (dis)Connected Age** (Theatre Calgary, three Calgary Critics Awards including "Best Production of a Musical"). They also wrote the score to **The Louder We Get** (formerly titled **Prom Queen**), which premiered at the Segal Centre in Montreal, received the 2016 Stage West Pechet Family Musical Award by the Playwrights Guild Of Canada, and has been showcased at the NAMT Festival of New Musicals (NYC), The Other Palace (London, UK), The Grand Theatre (London, ON), and will be directed by **Lonny Price** at Theatre Calgary in early 2020. Their show *Grow* (with librettist Matt Murray) will debut at The Grand Theatre in April 2020, after being workshopped at Sheridan College's Canadian Musical Theatre Project and at the 2018 Next Stage Festival.

Colleen & Akiva's songs have been performed internationally by cabaret performers, recording artists, and Broadway stars. They were selected as participants in the Johnny Mercer Writers Colony at Goodspeed Musicals, the Johnny Mercer Songwriters Project in Chicago, the Cutting-Edge Composer series in New York, the Canadian Musical Theatre Writer Collective, Theatre 20's Composium, Musical Stage Company's Launch Pad, Noteworthy, Make Me a Song and One Song Glory initiatives. They are grateful for support from the Foundation Assisting Canadian Talent On Records, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Canada Council For the Arts.

Instagram: @colleendauncey / @akivars

Twitter: @colleenandakiva

**Matt Murray** (Book) *Grow* will have its world premiere, spring 2020 at London's Grand Theatre.

Previously, *Grow* was workshopped as part of Sheridan's 2019 *Canadian Music Theatre Project* where it was first developed in 2016 under the title **Rumspringa Break!** The show was presented in 2018 at Toronto's Factory Theatre as part of the *Next Stage Theatre Festival*. Matt co-wrote **My Bonnie Lass** (book, music, lyrics) in collaboration with acclaimed recording artist **Johnny Reid**. In winter, 2019, *My Bonnie Lass* received a workshop production at Theatre Sheridan where it was first developed as part of the 2017 *CMTP*. Matt's third Ross Petty Pantomime – **Lil' Red Robin Hood** – will play the 2019 holiday season at Toronto's historic Winter Garden Theatre. Previous Ross Petty Pantos were **The Wizard of Oz** and **A Christmas Carol**, both at Toronto's Elgin Theatre. *A Christmas Carol* was recorded for broadcast by CBC/Family Channel. Matt is also book writer for **Going Under**, another collaboration with Colleen Dauncey and Akiva Romer-Segal. *Going Under* will be produced by Yellow Door Theatre Project in winter of 2019.

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