



For Immediate Release

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THE NEW YORK MUSICAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

Patricia Miller and

DiStar Productions/Diana Glazer

Proudly Present the World Premiere of

THE GREAT UNKNOWN

An American Musical Adventure

Book by Tony-winning librettist of *Big River*, **WILLIAM HAUPTMAN**

Music and Lyrics by **JIM WANN** (*Pump Boys & Dinettes*)

Starring

DAN AMBOYER*

MIMI BESSETTE*

TOM HEWITT*

CELIA MEI RUBIN*

EDMUND BAGNELL*

BOBBY DAYE*

KRISTIN MALONEY*

THOMAS STEWART

STEVEN BECKINGHAM*

KELLI GAUTREAU*

COLIN CAMPBELL MCADOO*

ELI ZOLLER*

*Performing courtesy of Actors' Equity Association.

Music Direction by **WAYNE BARKER**

Choreographed by **LIZA GENNARO**

Directed by **DON STEPHENSON**

An official selection of the 2010 New York Musical Theatre Festival
OCTOBER 5 – OCTOBER 16, 2010 AT THEATER AT ST. CLEMENT'S

TICKETS ON SALE AT NYMF.ORG

The New York Musical Theatre Festival, Patricia Miller and DiStar Productions/Diana Glazer are pleased to announce the world premiere production of *THE GREAT UNKNOWN*, choreographed by Liza Gennaro and directed by Don Stephenson. *THE GREAT UNKNOWN* will play a limited engagement at the Theater at St. Clement's (423 West 46th Street, NYC). Performances begin Tuesday, October 5 and continue through Saturday, October 16.

The Great Unknown is a jubilant Americana musical about big dreams and even bigger risks.

Hoping to inspire and revive a fractured nation, one-armed Civil War veteran John Wesley Powell leads a daring expedition of veterans down the Colorado River to the Grand Canyon, in the spring of 1869. Aware of the physical dangers, Major Powell barely anticipates the emotional and spiritual challenges of the trip, leading back to the War.

The guide of the expedition is Somers, who escaped from slavery and embraced the new world of the West. Major Powell's wife Emma Dean, a noted environmentalist of the day, is present in the minds and hearts of both Major Powell and his brother Walter, a survivor of Andersonville prison; as they are in hers.

With a contemporary folk/musical theatre score enhanced by environmental elements, ***The Great Unknown*** is an American musical adventure.

The production stars **Tom Hewitt** (Broadway: title role in *Dracula, The Musical*; Frank 'N' Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show* (Tony, Drama Desk nominations), *The Boys From Syracuse*, Scar in *The Lion King*, *The Sisters Rosenzweig*) as **Powell**, **Dan Amboyer** (*Play About the Naked Guy*) as his brother **Walter**, **Kristin Maloney** (NYMF Alum *War Brides* and *Liberty Smith*) as his wife **Emma** and **Bobby Daye** (Broadway: *Shrek, The Color Purple, The Lion King, and Smokey Joe's Café*) as **Somers**.

The production features scenic/props design by **Edward K. Ross**, costume design by **Martin T. Lopez**, and lighting design by **Christopher E. Edwards**.

Ritt Henn (Associate Music Director) will lead an onstage band of musicians composed of **Liz Queler, Spiff Wiegand** and **Robin Daniels**.

The Great Unknown plays the following schedule:

Tuesday, Oct 5th, 2010 at 8:00 pm
Wednesday, Oct 6th, 2010 at 1:00 pm
Sunday, Oct 10th, 2010 at 3:00 pm
Wednesday, Oct 13th, 2010 at 5:00 pm
Friday, Oct 15th, 2010 at 9:00 pm
Saturday, Oct 16th, 2010 at 1:00 pm

Tickets are \$20 and are available online at <http://www.nymf.org/show-1393.html>

Running Time: 95 minutes

Website: www.greatunknownmusical.com

BIOGRAPHIES

Jim Wann (*Composer/Lyricist*) is the principal author/composer of Broadway's Tony-nominated (Best Musical) *Pump Boys and Dinettes* in which he appeared, originating the role of "Jim". The London production of *Pump Boys* received an Olivier nomination for Best Musical, and the Toronto version won Canada's Best Musical (Dora Award). The longest-running musical in Chicago theatre history, *Pump Boys* continues to be produced across the country and around the world, most recently in South Korea.

Off-Broadway, Mr. Wann co-wrote (with Bland Simpson) *Diamond Studs: The Life Of Jesse James*, A Saloon Musical; *Kind Mackerel & The Blues are Running: Songs And Stories Of The Carolina Coast* (with Mr. Simpson, Don Dixon, and Jake Mills); and *The People Vs. Mona: A Musical Mystery Screwball Comedy* (with his wife Patricia Miller). The new *Mona* cast recording (JAY Records, London) features Marc Kudisch, Christiane Noll, Lillias White, Natalie Toro, and Ron Raines. Songs from *King Mackerel* and its cd followup, *Wild Ponies*, are performed annually in concert by the *Coastal Cohorts* (Wann, Simpson, and Dixon), now in their 25th year of fundraising for environmental and arts organizations.

On September 25, 2010, the premiere of Mr. Wann's *New Bern Romance*, commissioned by the Carolina Chamber Music Festival, will commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of New Bern, N.C. The song cycle features baritone Ron Raines.

Mr. Wann has recorded a cd of Johnny Mercer songs (*Pardon My Southern Accent*, Vol. 1) and one of his own songs (Vol. 2), and acted as host of *Farmer's Almanac TV*, a "green" lifestyle series on PBS nationwide. He is a graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, where he was a Morehead Scholar and member of the Order Of The Golden Fleece, the University's honor society dedicated to unity, harmony, and service.

William Hauptman (*Book*) is the Tony-winning librettist of *BIG RIVER*, based on *Huckleberry Finn*, which also won a Tony for Best Musical. He has published *Good Rockin' Tonight*, a collection of short stories; *The Storm Season*, a novel; a plays including *Domino Courts/Comanche Cafe*, an Obie winner. A Guggenheim fellow, his work includes screenplays for Amblin and Merchant-Ivory and journalism for the *New York Times*.

Don Stephenson (*Director*) most recently directed *Of Mice and Manhattan* at the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center, *Titanic* at The MUNY Opera and *The 39 Steps* at The Flat Rock Playhouse. He directed the critically acclaimed productions of *Oleanna*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Three to get Ready*, and the hit musical comedy *Doctors and Diseases* at the historic Barter theatre; it subsequently moved Off-Broadway to the Players Theatre. Other New York directing credits include *Buck Simple* (Garrick Gaities), *When Pigs Fly* (Kaufman Theatre), *Golden Voices* (Symphony Space), *Old Flames* (Theatre Studio Inc.) and a workshop production of *My Time Of Day: The Letters, Lyrics and Music of Frank Loesser*. Regionally, Don has directed productions of *The Desperate Hours* and *Through All Kinds of Weather*, both at the Clarence Brown Theatre and *Sleeping Beauty* at American Stage Festival. As an actor, he was most recently seen on Broadway in *Rock of Ages* where he played the role of Hertz Kleinman. He starred as Leo Bloom in the TONY award winning Broadway production of *The Producers*, and before that played Victor in the TONY Award winning revival of *Private Lives*. Also on Broadway he created the role of Renfield in *Dracula* and created the role of Charles Clarke in the TONY Award winning production of *Titanic*. Don later returned to the show where he played radioman Harold Bride. Other Broadway credits include Leo Frank and Mr. Peavy in the original company of *Parade* at The Vivian Beaumont Theatre, Bingo Little in *By Jeeves* at the Helen Hayes Theatre, Dickie Clarke in *Pardon My English*, and he appeared as Frank Lippencott in the revival of *Wonderful Town* at Lincoln Center. On television he has appeared on *Ugly Betty*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Possible Side Effects* (pilot), *Now and Again*, *All My Children*, *As The World Turns*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and *SUV, By Jeeves*, and played the role of David Jordan on the soap *Another World*. A native of Chattanooga Tennessee, Don holds a B.A. from University of Tennessee. He is married to actress Emily Loesser and they have four children.

Liza Gennaro (*Choreographer*) choreographed the critically acclaimed Broadway revival of *The Most Happy Fella* and the Broadway revival of *Once Upon a Mattress* starring Sarah Jessica Parker. She has choreographed extensively in regional theaters across the country including: The Guthrie, The Old Globe, Hartford Stage, Actor's Theater of Louisville, The Goodspeed Opera House, and collaborated with Stephen Flaherty and Frank Galati on their chamber musical *Loving, Repeating: A Musical of Gertrude Stein* for the About Face Theater in Chicago. She choreographed the 30th Anniversary tour of *Annie* and Roundabout Theater Company's *Tin Pan Alley Rag* (2010 Outer Critics Circle Nomination, Outstanding New Off-Broadway Musical). In addition to her choreographic career Liza teaches at Barnard College and holds a master's degree in Dance Studies from New York

University. Her essay, "Evolution of Dance in the Golden Era of the American 'Book Musical'" will appear in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical*, later this year. Her essay "'Broken Dolls': Representations of Dancing Women in the Broadway Musical" can be read in the online Journal Bodies of Work, <http://www.bodiesofwork.info/Bob%20Fosse.html>.

Now in its seventh year, the **New York Musical Theatre Festival** (NYMF) is the largest annual musical theatre event in America and is widely regarded as the essential source for new material and talent discovery. NYMF provides a launching pad for the next generation of musicals and their creators to ensure the continued vitality of one of America's greatest art forms. Hailed as the "Sundance of Musical Theatre," NYMF discovers, nurtures, and promotes promising musical theatre artists and producers at all stages of development, and inspires a diverse audience through vibrant, accessible, powerful new work.

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NYMF Memberships, which combine charitable contributions with valuable, flexible ticket packages and perks like early seating, and tickets to individual events are currently available for purchase at (212) 352-3101 or www.nymf.org. Single tickets for Festival events will go on sale September 1.

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