



New Frank Wildhorn Musical Leads Village Theatre's 20th Annual Festival of New Musicals August 12-13, 2023, Issaquah

SEATTLE, WA (August 3, 2023) – Village Theatre is thrilled to welcome back in-person the nationally renowned **Festival of New Musicals**, August 12-13, in Issaquah, Wash. Now in its 20th year, this theatrically packed weekend brings together the nation's brightest musical theatre writers and provides Seattle area theatre-lovers with the rare opportunity to see first-hand how a new musical comes to life.

This year's selected shows are:

Perpetual Sunshine & the Ghost Girls, based on a true story of the workers poisoned by the U.S. Radium Corporation—and the women who fought back.
(Book and Lyrics by **Sara Cooper**, Music by **Lynne Shankel**)

Baked! The Musical, a hilarious and touching all-Asian show about family, friendship, failure, and the greatest drug empire ever run by high schoolers.
(Book, Music, and Lyrics by **Jord Liu and Deepak Kumar**)

Reunion, the epic story of fictional 1970s L.A. rock band Archer featuring music and lyrics by Grammy, Tony, and Emmy Award-nominated composer/producer **Frank Wildhorn**.
(Book and Lyrics by **Rinne B. Groff**, Music and Lyrics by **Frank Wildhorn**, Music Supervision/Arrangements/Orchestrations by **Jason Howland**, Music Consulting by **Peter Asher**, CBE, Associate Music Directed/Executive Produced for **Frank Wildhorn** by **Nick Cheng**)

The Break, in which one couple attempts a 30-day, no-questions-asked hiatus to save their committed, monogamous, and still unmarried relationship (things do not go as planned).
(Music by **Michael Kooman**, Book and Lyrics by **Christopher Dimond**)

"The future of musical theater is being written at Village Theatre," says **Artistic Director Adam Immerwahr**. "For over 20 years, we have had a steadfast commitment to nurturing, growing, and cultivating new musicals. In the shadows of the Issaquah Alps, these writers will bring light with gorgeous and powerful new stories, full of soul-stirring and toe-tapping music, that will shape the next generation of American musical theater."

Village Originals has launched more than 180 new musicals into the universe, sending them across the country, to Broadway, and worldwide, and jumpstarting beloved hits like ***Million Dollar***



Quartet and the Pulitzer Prize-winning **Next to Normal**. The Festival also features **Quick Musicals**, a collaborative event with **The 14/48 Projects** in which three short musicals are written, rehearsed, and presented in just over 24 hours.

“The Festival is an incredible opportunity for creative teams to go to what we call ‘musical theatre summer camp’ for a week of writing, experimenting, and dreaming, working shoulder-to-shoulder with other writing teams in what might otherwise be a lonely process,” says **Associate Artistic Director Brandon Ivie**. “Bringing artists together is part of the joy of the Festival. We have a fantastic mix of both up-and-coming talent alongside well-established titans of the field all working side-by-side on the same goal: to create the next, great American musical. Add a company of local theatre artists and musicians bringing these stage readings to life, and you’ve got the new musical madness that is the Festival of New Musicals.”

Theatre-goers may attend as a **Village Originals Member** to enjoy the full weekend of events, including a kickoff party and closing gathering, or become a **One Day Festival Member** to attend Saturday or Sunday. Memberships are on sale now at VillageTheatre.org/Festival or by phone at (425) 392-2202.

Perpetual Sunshine & the Ghost Girls

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2 p.m.

Book and Lyrics by **Sara Cooper**, Music by **Lynne Shankel**

Directed by **Sheila Daniels**

Music Directed by **Tim Symons**

Featuring an all-women+ cast and an original through-composed 1920-2020s mashup score, Richard Rodgers Award-winning musical *Perpetual Sunshine & the Ghost Girls* tells the true story of the capitalist exploitation and knowing radium poisoning of workers by the U.S. Radium Corporation — and the women who fought back.

Sara Cooper is a playwright-lyricist. Recent highlights: *Perpetual Sunshine & the Ghost Girls*, Richard Rodgers Award (2022), National Alliance for Musical Theatre (2022), Rhinebeck Writers Retreat (2021), New York Theatre Barn’s New Works Series (2021), 5X15 (Beck Center for the Arts, in collaboration with Baldwin Wallace University 2021), National Alliance for Musical Theatre 15-Minute Challenge winner (2020); The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Lucille and Jack Yellen Award (2021); *Commercial musical adaptation of a major motion picture (TBA)*; *HOT*, Goodspeed Festival of New Musicals (2022), Johnny Mercer Foundation Writers Grove (2020), New York Theatre Barn’s New Works Series (2020); *The Memory Show*, LAMB Theatre (2022), New Bard Productions, London (2016), Transport Group, The Duke on 42nd Street (2013), Water Gate Media, Seoul (2012–2013), Barrington Stage Company (2010), National Alliance for Musical Theatre (2010); Barrington Stage Company Spark Grant (2020); *Polyanna*, TV pilot, Grand Jury Prize, Barnstorm Media (2020); *Elevator Heart*, Moxie Arts (2019), USF (2018), Tisch New Musicals (2016); *Fault Lines*, The Kennedy Center (2018), American Opera Initiative (2017). Jonathan Larson Grant (2014). MFA graduate musical theatre

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writing, New York University. Dramatists Guild, American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. <http://saracooper.me>

Lynne Shankel is a composer, lyricist, orchestrator, arranger, and music supervisor. Lynne and Sara Cooper won the 2022 Richard Rodgers Award as well as the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers Foundation's Lucille and Jack Yellen Award for their musical *Perpetual Sunshine & the Ghost Girls*. It was also featured in the National Alliance for Musical Theatre's Festival of New Musicals (2022). Other works include *HOT* (University of Michigan New Works Festival 2023, Goodspeed Festival of New Works 2022, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat 2021, Johnny Mercer Foundation Writers Grove 2020, New York Theatre Barn New Works Series 2020, Dixon Place 2019); *POSTCARD AMERICAN TOWN* (World Premiere, San Diego State University 2022, Winner of SDSU New Musicals Initiative 2020, New York Theatre Barn New Works Series 2019, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat 2018); and *Bare: The Musical* (Off-Broadway 2012). In 2017, Lynne released her critically acclaimed double album *Bare Naked* on Yellow Sound Label. Lynne teaches musical theatre composition at the University of Michigan.

Baked! The Musical

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 8 p.m.

Book, Music, and Lyrics by **Jord Liu** and **Deepak Kumar**

Directed by **Desdemona Chiang**

Music Directed by **Claire Marx**

When she doesn't receive the scholarship that would send her to her dream school, habitual overachiever Jane Huang, with the help of her best friend, joins forces with the class degenerate to build the greatest drug empire ever run by high schoolers. Kept in the dark are Jane's parents, whose inability to cope with their daughter leaving for college while maintaining a profit at their struggling Chinese bakery drives them to pry and potentially unravel Jane's web of lies. *Baked! The Musical* is a hilarious and touching all-Asian show about family, friendship, and failure. It features an all-Asian American cast, and the themes are born out of the writers' own experiences growing up as the children of immigrants in the US.

Jord Liu (she/her) is a theatre maker and musician based in San Francisco, CA. Jord's first show, *Baked! The Musical*, (co-created with Deepak Kumar) premiered at the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival 2020, where it won awards for Best Lyrics, Best Lead Performer, Best Supporting Performer, and Best Ensemble. Since then, the show has been accepted into RAVE 2020, New York Musical Festival 2020, and most recently The Festival of New Musicals (National Alliance for Musical Theatre 2022). She is a semifinalist in the National Music Theater Conference (Eugene O'Neill Theater Center), as well as a resident with San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Company's 2022 Creators Lab. Her work has been produced by theatres in NYC, Chicago, and San Francisco.

Deepak Kumar (he/him) is a South Asian-American playwright, lyricist, and composer based out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His work prominently features Asian-Americans grappling with the messiness of



their identities. His first show, *Baked! The Musical* (co-written with Jord Liu) was featured at the Chicago Musical Theatre Festival 2020, where it won awards for Best Lyrics, Best Lead Performer, Best Supporting Performer, And Best Ensemble. His theatre work has been produced with the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center (National Playwrights Conference 2022), the National Alliance for Musical Theatre Festival of New Musicals (NAMT 2022), the National Asian American Theatre Company (NAATCO), Musical Theatre Factory, PACE University, FaultLine Theater, Underscore Theatre, and Shotgun Players. When Deepak is not writing plays and musicals, he moonlights as a computing researcher.

Reunion

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 1 p.m.

Book and Lyrics by **Rinne B. Groff**

Music and Lyrics by **Frank Wildhorn**

Music Supervision/Arrangements/Orchestrations by **Jason Howland**

Music Consulting by **Peter Asher**, CBE

Directed by **Gabriel Barre**

Music Directed by **Daniel Edmonds**

Associate Music Directed/Executive Produced for Frank Wildhorn by **Nick Cheng**

Remember that band, Archer, that blew up big in the L.A. rock scene in the 70s and then imploded so violently right when they were hitting the peak of their fame? No, you weren't too stoned to remember. The band is fictional. But the rock 'n roll music is real. Come hear the greatest hits of the band that never was, but will be.

Grammy, Tony, and Emmy Award nominated composer/producer **Frank Wildhorn's** works span the worlds of popular, theatrical, and classical music. In 1999, Frank became the first American composer in 22 years to have three shows running simultaneously on Broadway with *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and *The Civil War*. Also for Broadway: *Bonnie & Clyde*, *Dracula*, *Victor/Victoria*, *Wonderland*, and the revival of *Jekyll & Hyde*. West End: *Death Note: The Concert*, *Bonnie & Clyde*. International: *Carmen*, *Casanova*, *Camille Claudel*, *Cyrano*, *Death Note*, *Fist of the North Star*, *Mata Hari*, *Mitsuko*, *Never Say Goodbye*, *No Longer Human*, *Rudolf*, *Tears of Heaven*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Man Who Laughs*, *Your Lie in April*, and *Xcalibur*. Upcoming: *Song of Bernadette* and *Reunion*. He produced *Harlem Song* at the famed Apollo Theatre. The Korea Times recently proclaimed Wildhorn as "Korea's most loved musical composer." In November 2022, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra World Premiered Wildhorn's full length "Danube Symphony" at the famed Musikverein. Europe's Musical Zentrale noted, "With his 'Donau Symphonie,' he (Wildhorn) manages to completely reinvent himself and to overcome the (already artificial) separation between light and serious music." Conducted by Koen Schoots, the performance also featured suites from the Wildhorn musicals *Jekyll & Hyde* and *Dracula*. The "Danube Symphony" was released on CD and streaming services in December 2021 through HitSquad Records. Frank served as music director for the Goodwill Games in New York City (1998). He wrote the song "Gold," the opening number for the 2002 Winter Olympics. Among the artists who have recorded and performed Frank's works: Whitney Houston (#1 international hit "Where Do Broken Hearts Go?"), Natalie Cole, Kenny Rogers, Sammy Davis, Jr., Liza Minnelli, Julie Andrews, Hootie & the Blowfish, The

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Moody Blues, Johnny Mathis, Linda Eder, Freddie Jackson, Trisha Yearwood, Stacy Lattisaw, Molly Hatchet, Blues Traveler, Trace Adkins, Patti LaBelle, Jeffrey Osborne, BeBe Winans, Amy Grant, and Anthony Warlow, to name a few. He received the prestigious Charles Dickens Award from USC, where there is a scholarship under his name and is an Associate Artist at the Alley Theatre in Houston.

Rinne B. Groff's plays and musicals have been produced at The Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, Trinity Repertory Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Yale Repertory Theatre, WP Theater, Performance Space New York, and Clubbed Thumb, among others, in the United States and internationally. She also writes for television, most recently developing shows for Apple TV and AMC. Rinne is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Whiting Writers Award, and an Obie Award grant. She is a founding member of Elevator Repair Service Theater Company, alumni playwright of New Dramatists, and is a Dramatists Guild member and on faculty at NYU Tisch School of the Arts Department of Dramatic Writing.

Peter Asher, CBE is an English guitarist, singer, manager, and record producer. He came to prominence as one half of the pop music duo and '60s hitmakers Peter and Gordon and then as head of A&R for the Beatles' Apple Records. As a manager, Asher guided the careers of such legendary talent as James Taylor, Linda Ronstadt, Joni Mitchell, and Carole King, among others. As a producer, he has worked with not only Taylor and Ronstadt but with Cher, Diana Ross, Bonnie Raitt, Randy Newman, Billy Joel, 10,000 Maniacs, Hans Zimmer, Ed Sheeran, and more. In 2019, Asher published a book, *The Beatles from A to Zed*, based upon his long-running radio show on the Beatles channel at SiriusXM, "From Me to You." He continues to perform regularly with his acclaimed live show "A Musical Memoir of the 60s and Beyond."

The Break

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 7 p.m.

Music by **Michael Kooman**

Book and Lyrics by **Christopher Dimond**

Directed by **Brandon Ivie**

Music Directed by **R.J. Tancioco**

As they approach their tenth anniversary, Charlie and Samantha's relationship is stalling. They're committed, monogamous, and yet (still) unmarried. And so they come up with what they believe to be a perfectly logical solution in an attempt to save their stagnating relationship: they will take a thirty day, no-questions-asked break. A sexual Rumspringa, if you will. Things do not go as planned...

Michael Kooman (Music) and **Christopher Dimond** (Book and Lyrics) are an Emmy-nominated writing team for the stage and screen. Their most recent musical, *Romantics Anonymous*, debuted to rave reviews at Shakespeare's Globe. They wrote more than 150 songs for Disney's "Vampirina," an animated musical TV series, reaching over 100 million viewers in 115 countries. Other television work includes Netflix's "Ridley Jones," "Dead End: Paranormal Park," and "Spirit Rangers." Michael and Chris have written songs for Patti Lupone, Audra McDonald, Sutton Foster, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Patina Miller, Sara Ramirez, Christian Borle, Andrew Rannells, Santino Fontana, Christopher Jackson, Skyler Astin, Henry Winkler, Rachel Bloom, Alfred Molina, and Wanda Sykes. Their stage projects include *The Noteworthy*

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Life of Howard Barnes (Village Theatre), *Orphie and the Book of Heroes* (The Kennedy Center), *The Enlightenment of Percival von Schmootz* (Adirondack Theatre Festival), *Judge Jackie: Disorder in the Court* (Pittsburgh CLO), *Dani Girl* (licensed by Samuel French), *Golden Gate* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and *Junior Claus* (licensed by Dramatic Publishing). Awards and honors include the Fred Ebb Award, a Jonathan Larson Grant, the Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award, the Samuel French Next Step Award, the Burton Lane Award, and the Harold Adamson Award. They are members of the Dramatists Guild and The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers Foundation, and are proud alumni of Carnegie Mellon University. Their debut album, *Out Of Our Heads*, and the world premiere recording of *The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes* are now available on iTunes and Spotify. Learn more at koomandimond.com

ABOUT VILLAGE THEATRE

Based in Issaquah, Wash., with operations in Everett, Wash., Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theatre in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining, quality productions since 1979, Village Theatre has grown into one of the region's best-attended theatres. Through its Village Originals program, Village Theatre is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having supported the creation of over 175 new works to date. Village Theatre also takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its Youth Education programs, serving thousands of young people and their families annually.

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FOR EDITORS/PRODUCERS

WHAT:

The Festival of New Musicals

Don't miss your chance to see the next big musical hit at Village Theatre's annual Festival of New Musicals! Join this theatrically packed weekend to enjoy stage readings of brand-new works from some of the nation's brightest musical theatre creators, presented in collaboration with some of the Seattle area's finest performers to create the future of America's most extraordinary art form.

Village Originals has launched more than 180 new musicals into the universe, sending them across the country, to Broadway, and worldwide. The Festival jumpstarted Broadway favorites like *Million Dollar Quartet* and *Next to Normal*. Become a member today to be a part of new musicals in the making!

WHERE:

Village Theatre
Francis J. Gaudette Theatre
303 Front Street N, Issaquah

WHEN:

August 12–13, 2023

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MEMBERSHIPS:

Village Originals Member: \$300

One Day Festival Member: \$75

For membership information >> VillageTheatre.org/Festival

CONNECT WITH VILLAGE THEATRE

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Facebook - [/VillageTheatre](https://VillageTheatre)

Instagram - @village_theatre

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PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

For available photography and video, please visit Village Theatre's online [press room here >>](#)

VILLAGE THEATRE'S COVID SAFETY PLAN

For Village Theatre's most up-to-date COVID safety protocols, [please visit Village Theatre online here >>](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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