

## **Tick...Tick...NEWS! Broadway Updates with Heather Power**

Hello **CFPA** friends and family, and welcome back to Tick...Tick...NEWS! Broadway Updates with (you guessed it) Heather Power. Oh boy everyone, there has been A LOT happening on the Broadway scene these past two weeks. Strap in, folks!

### **All Aboard! De Shields Departs *Hadestown***

That's right, *Hadestown* fans. If you can even believe it, the *Hadestown* team announced this past week that the beloved, supremely talented André De Shields will be playing his final performance as Hermes in the Tony-award winner for Best Musical on May 29th.



De Shields previously won the Tony for Best Actor in a Featured Role for his performance as Hermes in the show. Hermes - God of messengers, travellers, merchants, thieves, and oh so many other things - serves as a narrator in *Hadestown* for the tragic tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, a Herald of the story. I've had tickets twice now that were cancelled to go see *Hadestown* due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and now unfortunately I won't get to see his brilliant performance live. However, if I've seen and learned anything from the clips online, De Shields' performance was nuanced, intricate, gripping, and above all else, entertaining. If any of you readers are pondering making the trip, or already are planning to go to NYC before May 29th, I implore you to check out *Hadestown* before André De Shields takes his final bow!

## Beauty! Truth! Love! Broadway Casting Updates!



A LOT of news in the Broadway casting department has come out in these past two weeks, so I'm gonna share some of the most fun highlights with you all! If we recall from the last issue, it was announced that Aaron Tveit would be departing his role as Christian in *Moulin Rouge!* this May (which, sidebar, they posted [this clip of Aaron singing](#)



["Roxanne"](#) last week and I desperately need EVERYONE to watch it). At the beginning of last week they announced Tveit's replacement: Derek Klena (pictured left). Klena has played many a dreamboat on and off-Broadway, including Fiyero (*Wicked*), Dimitry (*Anastasia*) and Tommy Ross (*Carrie*), so the role of Christian will be a proper fit for him (and one that will work beautifully in his range as well! Another fun announcement was that *Pitch Perfect* star Skylar Astin (pictured right) will be joining the off-Broadway cast of *Little Shop of Horrors* as Seymour Krelborn, replacing Conrad Ricamora and becoming the fourth mainstay Seymour in the show's run (past players including Jonathan Groff and Jeremy Jordan). After serving some stunning vocals in the *Spring Awakening* reunion concert - more on that later - it will be a treat to see Skylar in this role!

The MUNY announced casting for a couple of their outdoor musicals this season over these past two weeks. Two notable announcements were the casts of *Mary Poppins* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. It was announced that Jeanna de Waal - most likely known for playing Princess Diana in *Diana: the Musical* and Chris Hargensen in the off-broadway revival of *Carrie* - will be playing the titular nanny, while *High School Musical* and *Kiss Me, Kate*'s Corbin Bleu will be playing adorable chimney sweep Bert. Personally, I think these two castings are a match made in heaven and I can't wait to get some clips! For *Joseph*, it was announced that the titular role will be played by

Jason Gotay of *Bring It On: The Musical*, while the Narrator is being played by icon, legend, superstar Jessica Vosk - perhaps best known for playing Elphaba in *Wicked* on Broadway. Another casting for *Joseph* that made me particularly excited was Mykal Kilgore as Pharaoh. Kilgore has some KILLER vocals and I can't wait to see them utilized more. Finally, a pre-Broadway run of the musical *1776* was announced, with a



huge twist on its casting. The cast was revealed to be completely composed of women, non-binary, and transgender people, a revolutionary casting of both *1776* and musical theatre in general. They are all pictured above, and I seriously am buzzing with excitement at this. I've never been a huge fan of *1776*, but give me a cast recording for this pre-Broadway run and that may change!

## **Out of the Woods: NPH Joins Sondheim *Encores***

It seems one peculiar, passing moment has occurred in the *Encores!* department. It was announced just a few days ago that Christian Borle, who was set to play The Baker in the *Encores!* production of *Into The Woods*, had to drop out of the production unexpectedly due to scheduling. The Baker will now be played by



*How I Met Your Mother* and *Hedwig* star Neil Patrick Harris. Some people are pissed, but I'll remain optimistic! Although, you had a PERFECT replacement Baker in the cast already in Gavin Creel, so I'll be pondering on that. The cast also features Sara Bareillis as The Baker's Wife, *The Color Purple*'s Heather Headley as The Witch, *The Great Comet*'s Denée Benton as Cinderella and *Hello Dolly!*'s Gavin Creel as the Wolf/Cinderella's Prince. *Into The Woods* runs at the New York City Centre from May 4th to May 15th, a special two-week run.

### **Those You've Known: The Spring Awakening Documentary**

Oh. My. God. This is seriously all I've been waiting for. If you can draw your memories back to November 2021, you may recall how the Original Broadway Cast of *Spring Awakening* reunited for a 15th Anniversary Concert in New York City at the Imperial Theatre. It was a one night only event and I was devastated when it wasn't streamed. However, it was announced this week that there is actually a DOCUMENTARY of the reunion concert arriving to HBO and HBO Max on May 3rd! Titled *Spring Awakening: Those You've Known*, the documentary will feature behind the scenes interactions and featurettes, performances from the reunion concert (Thank God), and interviews and stories from the original cast members and creatives. Original Cast Members of *Spring Awakening* include slightly controversial *Glee* star Lea Michele, *Glee*, *Mindhunter* and *Frozen* star Jonathan Groff, John Gallagher Jr., who won the Tony Award for Best Featured Actor in a Musical for his role as Moritz in the show, the aforementioned Skylar Astin, *Spongebob Squarepants the Musical*'s Lilli Cooper, and *Be More Chill*'s Gerard Canonico among many others. If you have the time or interest, check out the documentary on May 3rd!



## **Star of the Week: Stephanie Hsu**

If any of you are not familiar with this edition's **STAR OF THE WEEK**, I am honoured to introduce her to you! This incredibly talented woman is Stephanie Hsu. Stephanie is probably best known by musical theatre nerds everywhere as the adorable and lovable theatre kid Christine Canigula in both the original premiere cast and original Broadway casts of Joe Iconis' *Be More Chill*. In fact, here's [a clip of Stephanie singing "I Love Play Rehearsal"](#) from the *Be More Chill* Broadway workshop. This past week, Stephanie



starred in a new movie from the Daniels called *Everything Everywhere All At Once*. In it she plays Joy Wang, the distraught daughter of the film's protagonist Evelyn (played by Michelle Yeoh). The film has been a huge critical success so far, already generating Oscar buzz and becoming the highest rated movie of all time on Letterboxd! Some of that can for sure be thanks to the incredible performances, and Hsu's performance was one of my personal favourites. Give it up for Stephanie, and check out the film if you can!

## **Song of the Week: The Whole Being Dead Thing**

**CW: Coarse Language.** This week's SOTW comes from the zany Broadway musical adaptation of *Beetlejuice*, based on the 1988 movie of the same name! *Beetlejuice* reopened on Broadway on April 8th at the Marquis Theatre after having an early closure due to the pandemic, subsequently getting booted out of The Winter Garden theatre to make way for *The Music Man* revival. As you'll tell from the linked video, people were REALLY happy to see it back on the stage! "The Whole Being Dead Thing" features performances from Alex Brightman as Beetlejuice and the ensemble cast, with music and lyrics by Eddie Perfect! Here is the link to watch/listen: <https://youtu.be/xnLBSulmiW0>.

And as a bonus, since it's Easter, here's Gethsemane from *Jesus Christ Superstar!* Composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, lyrics by Tim Rice, performed by Steve Balsamo: [https://youtu.be/\\_QozXX7Ndrk](https://youtu.be/_QozXX7Ndrk)