



Hamilton, ON: April 19, 2024 - After a nationwide search, the National Centre for New Musicals (NCNM) at Theatre Aquarius is pleased to announce the selections for 2024/2025.

NCNM launched its first request for submissions in the fall of 2023 and received over 260 submissions - double the expected figure.

The curatorial team, a diverse group of twenty-four arts professionals hailing from every province and territory, was tasked with reading and grading all round-one submissions. This team, representing various artistic disciplines and backgrounds, ensured a comprehensive and inclusive selection process.

Following the initial round, twenty-five pieces were advanced for further consideration by the esteemed advisory committee. This committee, led by co-chairs Michael Rubinoff (Olivier Award-winning and Tony-nominated producer who conceived the longest-running Canadian musical in Broadway history, *Come From Away*) and Lily Ling (Broadway: *Hamilton*, *Hell's Kitchen*, *How to Dance in Ohio*, *Moulin Rouge!*), along with Theatre Aquarius Artistic Director Mary Francis Moore (*MAGGIE* by Johnny Reid and Matt Murray; world premiere at Theatre Aquarius, and American premiere at Goodspeed Opera House, world premiere of Tom Wilson's *Beautiful Scars*), and Sean Mayes (Broadway: *Hadestown*, *MJ: The Musical*), played a pivotal role in the final selection process.

Rubinoff is filled with anticipation for the first round of this ambitious project: "The inaugural NCNM group of artists is comprised of exciting musical theatre writers championing a diverse and compelling collection of stories. I am eagerly looking forward to the NCNM playing a significant role in developing these new works and launching them to stages at home and around the world, bringing these unique and powerful narratives to life."

"Lily and I have been energized by the submissions for this inaugural year of NCNM. It has given us great encouragement that so much new musical theatre work is happening in Canada, particularly with numerous voices and from varying perspectives within our community and country. We look forward to supporting these projects in their next stage!" says Mayes.

The national appetite for a bespoke developmental process has been encouraging to the team at NCNM. “We thought we were looking for two to three pieces. With the volume of applications and calibre of talent we’ve seen, we are delighted to announce that we’ve expanded that to five works, four in the development phase and one in the incubation phase,” says Moore.

With the leading support of the incite Foundation for the Arts and corporate and private donors, NCNM has selected five new musicals to support and develop over the upcoming year.

The pieces include:

The Pryce Academy

(In development)

A group of idealistic students put on a musical to expose the founder of their private school - Thurgood Pryce, who made his fortune with sugar plantations in the 1800s.

Book, Music and Lyrics by Mazin Elsadig & Philip McKee. Additional Music by Juan Ayala & Jennifer Ayala

Out

(In development)

A coming-of-age drama-comedy that weaves together the stories of three queer Asian kids in their mid-20s.

Book by Kalos Chu. Music by Ian Chan. Lyrics by JuHye Mun

The 7 Fires

(In development)

Inspired by the Anishinaabe 7 Fire prophecy, 7 strangers meet in the woods where they receive dreams from their Ancestors; a story of reconnecting, prophecy and resurgence.

Book by Dillan Chiblow. Music by Landon Doak. Lyrics by Landon Doak with Dillan Chiblow

Clown Riot

(In development)

Clown Riot is a rock opera based upon the true Toronto story of a travelling circus, a crew of local firefighters, and an eleven-year-old boy caught between two worlds.

Story by Christo Graham & Tyrone Savage. Music and Lyrics by Christo Graham

Limerick Gaolbreak

(In Incubation)

Inspired by the true story of a 19th-century prison escape in Ireland, *Limerick Gaolbreak* is the true-ish story of nine women who hatch a plan to sing their way to freedom.

Book by Mike Ross & Sarah Wilson. Music by Mike Ross. Lyrics by Sarah Wilson

For full show descriptions, headshots and bios for each team and project visit <https://theatreaquarius.org/national-centre-for-new-musicals/>

For more information and to arrange interviews, contact:

Neal Miller

Director of Marketing and Communications

905-522-7529 ext. 235

nmiller@theatreaquarius.org

NCNM supports projects at various stages in the development continuum – from early-stage concepts to previously workshopped or showcased work. Guided by a distinguished Advisory Committee comprised of celebrated theatre practitioners, NCNM will actively cultivate and strengthen new and diverse voices by ensuring that artists and creators are provided with mentorship and consultation to maximize their potential for success in the genre.

Theatre Aquarius is located on the territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek, and the Between the Lakes Purchase, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Theatre Aquarius is recognized as a leader in Canadian theatre. A registered not-for-profit, Theatre Aquarius produces work of the highest quality, premieres new plays, develops the skills of professional artists, invests in youth and families, and contributes to the quality of life in this region. Now entering its 51st season, Aquarius is a gathering place to create and share stories that provoke, delight, inspire, and transform.