



GEORGE STREET PLAYHOUSE

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New Musical from George Street Playhouse's Educational Touring Theatre to premiere at Spotlight on Environmental Education conference

'Gabi Goes Green!' to debut at April 1 event

New Brunswick, NJ – *Gabi Goes Green!*, a new musical from George Street Playhouse's Educational Touring Theatre, will make its public debut during a Spotlight on Environmental Education conference taking place at the New Brunswick theatre on Wednesday, April 1, 2015. The event, which takes place from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., will also feature experts on climate and the environment from Rutgers University, New Jersey Future and Sustainable Jersey for Schools.

More information about the Spotlight conference, including agenda and speaker bios, can be found at: <http://www.georgestreetplayhouse.org/specialevent/spotlightonenvironmentaleducation>

Gabi Goes Green! explores how individual choices can have a global impact on climate and the environment. With book and lyrics by Barry Wyner and music by Daniel Israel, the same creative duo behind the touring company's *Austin the Unstoppable*, the play tells the story of Gabi, an eighth-grade student who has transferred to a new school after her family's home was destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. Armed with her clever smartphone app Eartha, Gabi transforms into the Green Hero and battles Captain Carbon by empowering others to reduce their carbon footprint by making environmentally sound decisions.

This fun, upbeat musical comedy is sure to entertain student audiences, while also stressing the seriousness of climate change and the positive choices each of us can make to ensure a sustainable future. The play was commissioned by George Street Playhouse through the Victoria J. Mastrobuono New Work Development Program and a grant from Bloomberg.

"Climate change will be the defining challenge of the next generation. We want *Gabi Goes Green!* to inspire students to make positive environmental choices in regard to energy efficiency and sustainability," said Jim Jack, director of the production and GSP's Director of Education and Outreach. "And Barry and Daniel have once again created something for us that is entertaining as well as engaging.

"We also wanted to stress the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education and generate interest in these areas of study among student audiences," added Jack.

In order to produce content that is scientifically accurate, GSP worked with a number of environmental organizations and educational institutions, including Rutgers Climate Institute, Sustainable Jersey for Schools, Clean Ocean Action, NJ Recovery Fund, and New Jersey Future, to provide valuable research for the project and to align statewide environmental education objectives with the story content, post-play discussion protocols and study guide materials.

Gabi Goes Green! is aimed at elementary and middle-school students in grades 3 through 8, reaching approximately 10,000 students annually. Anticipating a lifetime run of five to seven years, the production is expected to be staged in front of a total 60,000-70,000 young people.

About the Creative Team

Barry Wyner (Book and Lyrics) has received the Kleban Prize, the Jerry Bock Award, the Richard Rodgers Award, and an IRNE nomination for best new play. His musical *Calvin Berger* has had full productions at Gloucester Stage Co., Barrington Stage Co., and George Street Playhouse (directed by 2-time Tony winner Kathleen Marshall). He also wrote the book and lyrics for GSP Educational Touring Theatre's *Austin the Unstoppable*, about nutrition and wellness. One of Mr. Wyner's songs was published in the BMI Workshop Songbook and recorded by Neil Patrick Harris.

Daniel Israel (Composer) is a member of the advanced BMI Lehman Engle Musical Theatre Workshop, where he is the recipient of the 2010 BMI Harrington Award for Creative Achievement in Musical Theatre. His other new musical in development, *The Dirty Hippie Jam Band Project*, has been featured at various showcases throughout New York City. Mr. Israel, who wrote the music for GSP Educational Touring Theatre's *Austin the Unstoppable*, also composes for The Water Coolers, a theatrical group that delivers musical comedy to corporate audiences.

Matt Castle (Music Director) is currently pianist, musical director and co-orchestrator for *Into the Woods* at Roundabout Theatre Company. He has played, sung, directed and/or developed more than 70 new musicals at Sundance, NYU, Playwrights Horizons, York, Barrington, Weston, O'Neill, Signature, NYMF and CAP21. As an actor/musician, his credits include the 2007 Broadway revival of *Company*; the original off-Broadway casts of *The Musical of Musicals (The Musical!)*, *Enter Laughing* and *LingoLand*; and Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park's *Company* and *Merrily We Roll Along*.

Jim Jack (Director) is the Director of Education and Outreach for George Street Playhouse, supervising GSP's Academy, school-based residency programs, and acclaimed Educational Touring Theatre. Jim recently devised and directed *Our Town Now* for GSP, an interview-based piece of theatre exploring the lives of New Brunswick, N.J., residents. He teaches Shakespeare for the Graduate Acting Program at Brooklyn College and has worked with many arts organizations, including Roundabout Theatre Company, 92nd Street Y, ArtsConnection, Metropolitan Opera Guild and Northern Stage.

About GSP's Educational Programming

The centerpiece of George Street Playhouse's educational programming is its **touring theatre**, which commissions and produces first-class productions with relevant themes for young audiences, such as respect, cyber-bullying, conflict resolution, health and wellness, climate change and empathy. Each play is followed by a post-play discussion providing excellent starting points for engaging classroom conversations that can be used to fulfill New Jersey Common Core State Standards. GSP's Educational Touring Theatre features four issue-oriented productions seen by more than 40,000 students annually during the academic year. GSP's Theatre Academy, which offers classes throughout the year, focuses on the process of creative self-expression – enhancing students' artistry and creative problem-solving skills, while building self-esteem and a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts. For further information on any of GSP's educational opportunities, visit www.GSPonline.org, or call 732-846-2895, extension 117.

About George Street Playhouse

Under the leadership of Artistic Director **David Saint**, George Street Playhouse has become a nationally recognized theatre while providing an artistic home for established and emerging theatre artists. **Kelly Ryman** was appointed Managing Director in 2013. Founded in 1974, the Playhouse has been well represented by numerous productions both on and off-Broadway – including the Outer Critics Circle Best Musical Award-winner *The Toxic Avenger*; the Outer Critics Circle, Drama Desk and Drama League-nominated *The Spitfire Grill*; David Auburn's Tony and Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Proof*, which was developed at GSP during a two-week workshop in 1999; *It Shoulda Been You*, which will open on Broadway in spring 2015 after a 2011 debut at GSP; and *Clever Little Lies*, expected to debut off-Broadway in 2015.