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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **PASEK & PAUL, CINCO PAUL, KOOMAN & DIMOND AND MORE TO TAKE THE STAGE AT FIRST-EVER ASCAP FOUNDATION MUSICAL THEATRE FEST AT THE WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS STARTING ON JULY 11**

### **The ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Workshop Returns with Artistic Director and Musical Theatre Icon Stephen Schwartz as Part of the Fest**

NEW YORK, June 28, 2023 – **The ASCAP Foundation** and the **Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts** announce **The ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Fest**. The two-week, in-person event series, held at The Wallis in Beverly Hills, gives emerging musical theatre composers the chance to learn from the industry's leading lights. The programming kicks off with three days of educational panels from July 11-13.

With support from the **Gary Geld Musical Theatre Foundation**, The ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Fest is set to be an exceptional learning experience for musical theatre writers. The panels will explore the future of the musical theatre industry, focusing on the intersection of Hollywood and musical theatre. The conversations will feature advice from top composers and industry executives, and there will be a special song feedback panel featuring John McGrew, Samantha Hilscher, Sarah McMullen, Elisa Rice and Stephen Chesley (Netflix).

ASCAP members participating in the sessions include Oscar, Grammy, Tony and Olivier Award-winning songwriters/producers **Justin Paul** and **Benj Pasek** (*Dear Evan Hansen*, *La La Land*), screenwriter, Emmy-winning songwriter and ASCAP Foundation musical theatre workshop alumnus **Cinco Paul** (*Despicable Me*, *Schmigadoon!*) and Emmy-nominated songwriting duo and workshop alumni **Michael Kooman & Chris Dimond** (*Ridley Jones*, *Vampirina*).

**The 2023 ASCAP Foundation/Universal Theatrical Group (UTG) Musical Theatre Workshop** returns July 17-20 for the first time since the pandemic. The workshop is led by celebrated artistic director Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked, Godspell*). Emerging musical theatre composers are given the opportunity of a lifetime to workshop their new musicals. The program is composed of workshop sessions featuring prominent guests from all aspects of musical theater, including producers, directors, performers and composers.

“The ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Fest was inspired by Hollywood's obsession with our fiercely talented ASCAP members and workshop alumni who are taking their musical projects to streaming services,” said **The ASCAP Foundation Executive Director Nicole George-Middleton**. “It promises to be an incredible opportunity for emerging music creators to learn from top industry executives and the best musical theatre talent.”

“The Wallis is proud to continue its valued partnership with ASCAP and The ASCAP Foundation to champion the singular art of musical theatre and foster emerging voices in the field,” said **Robert van Leer, Executive Director & CEO of The Wallis**. “Providing a mentorship program of this caliber with artists and executives of this stature has transformed The Wallis and Beverly Hills into a hub of innovation for musical theatre.”

Esteemed ASCAP member **Gary Geld** was a successful pop songwriter, record producer and musical theatre composer. Geld’s major songwriting credits include “Sealed with a Kiss,” “Hurting Each Other” and “Save Your Heart for Me.” *Purlie* marked his Broadway debut in 1970, followed by *Shenandoah*. Both shows received multiple Tony nominations.

The panels and workshop sessions are free and open to the public. Reservations are required for all events and are available at [TheWallis.org/ASCAP](https://TheWallis.org/ASCAP). Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is located at 9390 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Beverly Hills.

Below is the full program schedule.

## **WEEK 1: July 11-13**

### **Tuesday, July 11, 2023**

#### **11:00 AM**

##### **Is Hollywood’s Obsession with Musical Theatre Talent Here to Stay?**

In July 2020, Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton* became the most streamed show in the United States. The viewership on Disney+ was so large that it easily surpassed the number of people who had seen the show live on Broadway. So, it’s no secret that streaming audiences love musical theatre. With shows like *Ridley Jones*, *John Mulaney & the Sack Lunch Bunch* and *Schmigadoon!* the streets of streaming are *teeming* with musical theatre talent. Is the obsession here to stay? How do studio executives view musical theatre talent? What are they excited about bringing to audiences next?

#### **2:00 PM**

##### **Using Social Media to Create a New Space for Musical Theatre**

In 2023, it’s clear that social media is breaking down the barriers to entry for young musical theatre writers. Now you can hear the stories of how those writers are utilizing the latest technology to create viral moments and pave the way for global collaboration.

## Wednesday, July 12, 2023

**10:00 AM**

### **Music Creators Roundtable**

Join a group of pro music creators for a wide-ranging discussion about their experiences working with the top Hollywood studios on musical projects. They'll talk career motivations, creative approaches and tips for how you, too, can build a bridge from Broadway to Hollywood and back again.

**1:00 PM**

### **Business As Usual: Best Practices for Getting Your Act Together**

"Music business" has two words – and "business" is longer than "music!" Today's top industry executives will provide practical advice on how you should build your team, protect your musical works and set yourself up for success.

**3:30 PM**

### **From *Despicable Me* to *Schmigago!*: In Conversation with Cinco Paul**

Take a trip to the magical musical world of Cinco Paul. He'll discuss his journey from celebrated screenwriter (*Despicable Me*, *The Lorax*, *The Secret Life of Pets*) to Emmy-winning songwriter (2022's Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics for "Corn Puddin'" from *Schmigadoon!*). We'll dive deep into the world of *Schmigadoon!* and discuss his latest move to *Schmigago!*

## Thursday, July 13, 2023

**11:00 AM**

### **Kooman & Dimond: The Life Cycle of a Song Demo**

Michael Kooman & Chris Dimond, the songwriting team behind *Vampirina* and *Ridley Jones*, present a workshop breaking down the life cycle of a song written for an animated streaming series. From concept to demo to show delivery, Kooman & Dimond will provide an in-depth look into a day in the life of an Emmy-nominated composer/lyricist.

**2:00 PM**

### **Song Feedback Panel: Words of Wisdom from Major Studio Execs**

What does it take to get your song in a streaming series? Emerging ASCAP members will put their talents on display and get real-time feedback on songs submitted for review by the creative team at Netflix. The executives will illustrate the process of pitching yourself for consideration and give practical takeaways on what the studios are looking for when hiring and working with composers and lyricists.

**7:30 PM**

### **Waving Through Their Window: An Evening with Benj Pasek & Justin Paul**

Pasek & Paul hit the Wallis stage to discuss what it's like to produce some of the most beloved music for the contemporary stage and screen. From their work on television (musical episodes of *Smash* and *The Flash*) and film (*The Greatest Showman*, *La La Land*) to their massive Broadway hits (*Dear Evan Hansen*, *A Christmas Story*), they'll cover it all. They will also break down their process on streaming hits like AppleTV+'s new holiday classic *Spirited*. Who knows what special guests might show up or who might hit the piano to illustrate just what makes these two the golden boys of streaming musicals?

## **WEEK 2: July 17-20**

The ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Workshop will feature a different musical each night. Sessions will begin promptly at 7:30 PM from July 17-20.

Visit <https://www.ascapfoundation.org/musicaltheatrefest> for more information on The ASCAP Foundation Musical Theatre Fest programming.

### **About The ASCAP Foundation**

Founded in 1975, The ASCAP Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to supporting American music creators and encouraging their development through music education, talent development and humanitarian programs. Included in these are songwriting workshops, grants, scholarships, awards, recognition and community outreach programs. The ASCAP Foundation is supported by contributions from ASCAP members and from music lovers throughout the United States. [www.ascapfoundation.org](http://www.ascapfoundation.org).

### **About Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. The campus, located in the heart of Beverly Hills, CA, is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 350 theater, dance, music, film, cabaret, conversation, and family entertainment programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed as “au courant” (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, “If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis.” Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike. The Wallis is led by Michael Nemeroff Chairman of The Wallis' Board of Directors, and Robert van Leer, Executive Director and CEO.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: [TheWallis.org](http://TheWallis.org).

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