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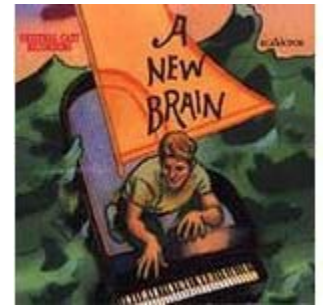
***FROGS HAVE SO MUCH SPRING...IN ASTORIA!***

*Astoria Performing Arts Center Presents Spring Musical, "A New Brain" this May 2007*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**APRIL XX, 2007 -- (Astoria, New York) --** The Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC) announced today their annual spring musical theatre revival, the comical musical *A New Brain* directed by OOBRA award winning director (and APAC Artistic Director) Brian Swasey, will open the first weekend of May, 2007.

*A New Brain* tells the story of Gordon, a struggling songwriter, who suffers a medical crisis when something goes wrong with his brain and he is forced to undergo surgery. At the time he is struck by illness, he is reluctantly composing a song for a children's television show featuring a frog by the name of "Mr. Bungee." The specter of this large green character and the unfinished work haunts him throughout his medical ordeal as he learns to appreciate life's precious moments, and finds new inspiration to compose the songs he yearns to produce.



"*A New Brain* is a show that I have loved for a long time. It's great to be able to bring this under-produced musical to Astoria," said APAC Artistic Director Brian Swasey. "It's a show that everyone can relate to on some level. Through a wide range of musical styles, *A New Brain* teaches us how to face obstacles, overcome them, and come out the other side a changed person."

This comical show follows Gordon's experiences when faced with illness and the ways that those closest to him, including his boyfriend, best friend, mother and business associates all deal with his situation,

Originally premiering Off-Broadway, *A New Brain*, with music and lyrics by William Finn and book by Finn and James Lapine, dealt directly with Finn's own harrowing personal experience with illness. However autobiographical *A New Brain* may be, it is a worthy follow-up to his celebrated Tony Award-winning production *Falsettos*, which also touched on medical matters in lively, unexpected ways.

"Last year, APAC was honored with three New York Innovative Theatre Awards for the musical Brian directed," said APAC Executive Producer Taryn Drongowski. "I can't wait to see what he will do with this fantastic story and beautiful music."

The cast includes Yolanda Batts, Justin Birdsong, Jim Dimarino, Sevan Greene, Shad Olsen, and Julie Rees, as well as Doug Chitel, Lois Hart, Joe Pace and Stephanie Wilberding who are appearing courtesy of Actor's Equity, with musical direction by Jeffrey Campos.

Performances will run every Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 6 p.m. beginning Friday May 4, 2007 through Sunday, May 20, 2007 at the Broccoli Theater – Variety Boys & Girls Club, located at 21-12 30th Rd at 21st St. in Astoria, Queens.

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$18 at the door for adults, \$12 for seniors and students, and \$5 for children under 10 years old, and are available at the door or via the Web at [WWW.APACNY.ORG](http://WWW.APACNY.ORG). For reservations or more information, please call 718-393-7505.

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**The Astoria Performing Arts Center (APAC)** is dedicated to providing high quality theatre and entertainment at an affordable cost for the Astoria/LIC communities and to supporting local youth and senior citizens. Founded in 2001, APAC is a not-for-profit professional theatre that couples its mainstage programming with community outreach efforts. Each year, APAC brings extended networks of artists, technicians and interns together to produce major musicals, classical, and modern plays. Committed to bringing new voices to visibility in New York theatre, APAC has held 3 playwriting contests, and produced two staged readings, as well as a showcase of songs from as-yet-unproduced original works of musical theatre. Examples from its youth and senior programming portfolio include an annual free summer intensive musical theatre training program for Astoria's 3<sup>rd</sup> –5<sup>th</sup> graders

("Summer Stars"), after-school playwriting classes for middle schoolers ("Astoria Playmaking Program"), and a popular training and performance program for senior citizens ("Senior Stars!") APAC strives to create innovative and engaging work equaling that of the most established and accomplished New York theatre companies. In 2004, APAC was honored with an Off Off Broadway Review Awards for its production of "Is there Life After High School?" In 2006, APAC's production of FOREVER PLAID garnered three nominations from the New York Innovative Theatre Awards including best direction, choreography, and production. (Both productions were helmed by APAC's Artistic Director, Brian Swasey.) The work APAC produces is accessible, in a broad sense: the programming is varied in order to cultivate a broad audience, produced regularly each season, and affordable --so that theater-going can become a habit--not just a rare treat--for the people who see APAC's shows.