

Lied Center for Performing Arts Pre-Performance Talk for *On Broadway*

A cast of 4 seasoned Broadway Artists will present a cabaret style concert of song from some of Broadway's favorite hit musicals including *The Lion King*, *Hamilton*, *Company*, *West Side Story*, *Waitress*, *The Music Man*, *Tina*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Hadestown*, *Come from Away*, *Aladdin*, *My Fair Lady*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Wicked*, *Chicago*, *Moulin Rouge*, *The Book of Mormon* and *Beautiful*. The 4 artists who will be taking the stage are Ariana Afsar, Alan H Green, Jacob Haren and Jessica Hendy.

Ariana Afsar is known for originating the role of Eliza in Chicago's production of *Hamilton*. Before her career on Broadway, Ariana was a reality tv sensation on American Idol, placing top 36 season 8. She also had great success in the pageant world earning the title of Miss America's Outstanding Teen 2005 and Miss California 2010. Ariana is a graduate of Ethnomusicology Jazz from UCLA, Afsar just released her debut album, "Somewhere I Thought I'd Be." She is also currently composing a new musical with playwright Lauren M Gunderson called *Jeanette*. An epic pop musical based on the true story of America's first congresswoman, *Jeanette* electrifies the life and history of suffrage activist, social worker and Montanan, Jeannette Rankin. *Jeanette* was the first woman elected into Congress 4 years before women could vote, This new musical has been selected for the prestigious O'Neill National Musical Theater Conference (one of three selected musicals from a pool of over 400). Other accomplishments of Ariana are that she opened for Michelle Obama at the Shrine Auditorium, performed at the U.S. Institute of Peace, and appeared at the ACLU national conference in D.C. She is an advocate/ performer/ and public speaker for The Women's March, The Social Innovation Summit, Nexus Global, The University of Chicago, The Move On rally on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court, and The United State of Women. She is a proud Bangladeshi AND a proud American.

Alan H Green is best known for his performance in several Broadway hit musicals including *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *School of Rock*, *Sister Act*, *Play On!* and *The Visit*. Alan was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania but raised in Texas. His father moved his family to Baytown, Texas when Alan was 5. He grew up there and went to Robert E Lee High School where he was Captain of the football team, a Blue Chip All American running back, played the String Bass in the Texas All State Orchestra, was one of the top debaters in the country, Student Council President, Homecoming King and graduated number 2 in a class of over 500 students. He attended Rice University on a football scholarship, majoring in pre-law but ended up graduating with a B.A. in Vocal Performance from Rice's Shepherd School of Music. During his last years in college he had a music ministry singing for churches and religious events all over the world. After college he sang on a cruise ship that literally took him to New York City. After only living in New York for three months Alan landed his first role on Broadway. Since then he has been seen and heard in concert from the White House to the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, on Broadway and Radio City and stages across the country and on the small screen.

Jacob Haren is best known for his performance in the Broadway hit musical *The Book of Mormon*. On his website, Jacob shares a fun story about how he got his start in the performing arts. Dad, I hate baseball. The famous words I was terrified to tell my Dad in Kindergarten. I knew I was getting close to T-Ball age, so I mustered up some courage and made the admission. His response, "That's okay, Jacob! We'll find something you like." Ooooh did they... After observing the natural partnership I had with my sister for all things singing and dancing, my parents had me audition for a local production of *Annie*. I marched in with my cassette tape accompaniment and sang a song called "Happy Birthday Jesus." I was hooked. I did my first musical when I was 6, dabbled in commercials (see headshot) before quickly telling my mom, "This is boring nobody claps for you," went to college to get a BFA in Musical Theatre, and then... made my Broadway debut at 26 with the word, "Hello." I love musical theatre with a fiery passion. But growing up meant realizing that what I truly love more than anything in the world is excellent storytelling. A good story is the shortest distance between two people, right? If only I had never told my Dad the truth! Maybe the acting bug would have spared me. Truth is... after the first time he watched me try and throw a baseball he looked at my mom and said "Um... that boy probably shouldn't touch that thing ever again."

Jessica Hendy is best known for her iconic performances in the Broadway hits such as *CATS*, *Amour* and *Aida*. She has also been a Guest soloist for many symphonies and orchestras nationally. Jessica Hendy is a Broadway veteran, best known for her roles in *CATS* and Amneris in *Aida*. Prior to her Broadway Debut, Jessica was featured on the national tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. She then made her Broadway Debut in 1999 in the ensemble of *CATS* and understudying Grizabella. She went on to star on the national tour of *CATS* in the role. Her next Broadway show was *Aida*, playing the outlandish, opulent Amneris. Jessica was also featured in the Original Broadway Cast of the musical *Amour*. Coming around full circle, Jessica most recently starred as Grizabella in the Andy Blankenbuehler helmed Broadway Revival of *CATS*. Jessica Hendy is the youngest actress to have played Grizabella in the original Broadway production.