

Santino Fontana, Laura Osnes and More to Perform in Concert Reading of THE BIG TIME with Princeton Symphony Orchestra

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On Friday, January 31 at 8:00pm, Broadway stars and musicians of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra perform a concert reading of *The Big Time*, a new musical comedy from **Douglas Carter Beane**, author of Broadway's *Sister Act*, *Cinderella*, and *Xanadu*. It's the height of the Cold War when Russian spies take over an ocean liner holding all of NATO. Leave it to lounge singers on board to save the day by teaching the communists to put down their Kalashnikovs and pick up singing, dancing, and comedy. The war is cold but the numbers are hot in this show with score and lyrics by Douglas J. Cohen, music direction by **Fred Lassen**. This is the second installment of the new PRINCETON POPS series, a collaboration of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and **McCarter Theatre Centre** at McCarter's Matthews Theatre.

The *Big Time* cast features Tony Award-winning Broadway stars **Santino Fontana** (*Tootsie*, *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella*, *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*) and **Debbie Gravitte** (*Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, *Chicago*), as well as **Laura Osnes** (*Bandstand*, *Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella*), **Jackie Hoffman** (*Fiddler on the Roof*, *Xanadu*, *Feud: Bette and Joan*), **Michael McCormick** (*Wicked*, *Hello Dolly*), **Bradley Dean** (*The Phantom of the Opera*, *Dear Evan Hansen*) and **Raymond Bokhour** (*Chicago*).

Describing the show's genesis, creator **Douglas Carter Beane** says, "I am a big fan of NATO. I also happen to be a big fan of **Steve Lawrence** and **Eydie Gorme**. I believe the three will save the world. Or maybe, just maybe, a long time ago—so long ago just about everyone forgot it—they actually did. From there, I just started writing."

Mr. Beane calls the upcoming concert reading, "a ton of fun," adding, "There are no sets, no costumes, and no dancing. Just an orchestra, and people reading the scenes of the show with vibrant acting and singing their hearts out. It is pure entertainment."

McCarter Theatre Center's Managing Director Michael S. Rosenberg is excited about bringing musicals like *The Big Time* to Princeton. He says, "While the idea for this show had been percolating for quite some time, this draft takes the show back to the 60s with all-new orchestrations that beautifully capture the Vegas lounge sounds of **Frank Sinatra** and the Rat Pack."

Tickets to the January 31 concert reading of *The Big Time* start at \$25 and are available online at mccarter.org and princetonsymphony.org, by phone at (609) 258-2787, or in person at the McCarter Ticket Office, located at 91 University Place in Princeton.