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**FOR RELEASE ON TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2011**

**AMERICAN THEATRE WING'S**  
**2011 JONATHAN LARSON® GRANTS**  
**WILL BE PRESENTED TO**  
**WRITING TEAMS BEHIND**  
**“CLOAKED,” “TAMAR AND THE RIVER,” & “THE KID”**

**PRESENTATION TO BE HELD TUESDAY, MARCH 29**

**New York, NY** – The **American Theatre Wing** announced today that the recipients of the 2011 **Jonathan Larson® Grants** are **Danny Larsen** (Composer/Co-Lyricist) & **Michelle Elliott** (Bookwriter/Co-Lyricist), ***Cloaked***; **Marisa Michelson** (Composer) & **Joshua H. Cohen** (Bookwriter/Lyricist), ***Tamar and the River***; and **Andy Monroe** (Composer), **Jack Lechner** (Lyricist) & **Michael Zam** (Bookwriter), ***The Kid***. The prestigious grants, totaling \$10,000, will be presented on Tuesday, March 29, 2011 at a private event in New York City. The event will feature special performances of the recipients' work.

The grants, given annually to honor emerging composers, lyricists and book writers, help to continue Tony Award®-winning composer Jonathan Larson's dream of infusing musical theatre with a contemporary, joyful, urban vitality. This year's recipients were selected by an expert panel consisting of **Maria Goyanes** (Associate Producer at The Public Theater), **Amanda Green** (*Bring it On: The Musical*) and **David Yazbek** (*The Full Monty*, *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Women on the Verge of Nervous Breakdown*).

Dedicated to celebrating excellence and supporting theatre, the American Theatre Wing awards the Larson Grants to artists to recognize and showcase their work with no strings attached - except to put it to the best use possible to help further the artist's creative endeavors.

Past recipients of the Larson Grants include **Tom Kitt & Brian Yorkey** (*Next to Normal*), **Chad Beguelin & Matthew Sklar** (*The Wedding Singer*), **John Bucchino** (*A Catered Affair*), **Laurence O'Keefe** (*Bat Boy: The Musical*), **Michael Korie** (*Grey Gardens*), and current selection panel member **Amanda Green**.

**The American Theatre Wing** (Theodore S. Chapin, Chairman, Board of Directors; Howard Sherman, Executive Director) is a not-for-profit organization best known as the creator of the Antoinette Perry “Tony” Awards®, which it presents annually with The Broadway League. In addition to “Downstage Center,” “In The Wings,” “Working in the Theatre” and a host of other online resources, The Wing sponsors many activities, all dedicated to recognizing excellence and supporting education in theatre. Visitors to [americantheatrewing.org](http://americantheatrewing.org) can listen to, watch or download from ATW's extensive media collection, and learn more about all of its programming

for students, aspiring and working professionals, and audiences who want to learn more about the making of theatre. Follow ATW on [Facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing](https://www.facebook.com/TheAmericanTheatreWing) and [Twitter.com/TheWing](https://twitter.com/TheWing).

## Biographies

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**Joshua H. Cohen** (Bookwriter & Lyricist, *Tamar and the River*). Cohan's lyrics (and sometimes music or book) include *Maggie the Pirate* (Winner, Chameleon Theatre Circle; upcoming workshops Momentum Rep, WKU Before Broadway), *Tamar and the River* (Signature Theatre), *Keep On Walkin'* (Amas/Actors' Harbor), *Speargrove Presents* (contributing writer; NY Theatre Barn), *Still Life With Toe Shoes* (workshop, Old Deerfield Productions; production, Musical Theatre Society of Emerson College), *The Entropy Songs* (Abingdon Theatre; upcoming, Libra Theatre), and *The Day the World Went QUEER!* (NY Fringe). One-acts: American Globe, Turtle Shell, Prospect, others. 2010 MAC nomination, "Sacrifice of Love." Plays include full-length *Fun and Games* (Little Hibiscus) and one-act "Odysseus Swims For It" (publication, Smith & Kraus). Collaborators include composers Marisa Michelson and Lavell Blackwell, playwrights James Armstrong and Jonathan Matthew Gilbert, and singer/essayist/raconteur Brooke Ferris. Managing Director, Blue Room Arts Collective; member of the Dramatists Guild; 2008-10 Fellow, American Lyric Theatre's Composer-Librettist Development Program. BA: Amherst College, MFA: NYU-GMTWP. [www.joshuahcohen.com](http://www.joshuahcohen.com)

**Michelle Elliot** (Bookwriter & Co-Lyricist, *Cloaked*) and Danny Larsen (composer & co-lyricist) met and began collaborating while attending NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program. Their first musical, *The Yellow Wood*, received the 2006 Richard Rodgers Development Award and the Daryl Roth Award. *The Yellow Wood* was presented as part of the 2007 New York Musical Theatre Festival and was part of the National Alliance of Musical Theatre Festival in October 2008. Their most recent collaboration, *Cloaked*, received a workshop production at CAP 21 in June 2010 and was presented as part of the Village Theatre's Festival of New Works in August 2010. Proud members of ASCAP, Danny and Michelle are currently devising several new works. While at NYU, Michelle was the recipient of the Tisch Achievement Award. Michelle also has a Master's in Directing from the University of Wisconsin – Superior, where she received the Excellence in Directing Award. Michelle was the co-founder and Artistic Director of Frontier Theatre in Minneapolis, where she wrote, directed and produced six original musicals.

**Danny Larsen** (Composer & Co-Lyricist, *Cloaked*) and Michelle Elliott (bookwriter & co-lyricist) met and began collaborating while attending NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program. Their first musical, *The Yellow Wood*, received the 2006 Richard Rodgers Development Award and the Daryl Roth Award. *The Yellow Wood* was presented as part of the 2007 New York Musical Theatre Festival and was part of the National Alliance of Musical Theatre Festival in October 2008. Their most recent collaboration, *Cloaked*, received a workshop production at CAP 21 in June 2010 and was presented as part of the Village Theatre's Festival of New Works in August 2010. Proud members of ASCAP, Danny and Michelle are currently devising several new works. Danny holds Bachelors of Arts degrees in Music and Theatre Education from Brigham Young University. He won the ACTF Kennedy Center Composition award for his music and lyrics for *Soft Shoe*, a new musical comedy, which premiered at BYU in 2002. He also won the Excellence in Music Award for *The Yellow Wood* at the New York Theatre Musical Theatre Festival in 2007. He has done an extensive amount of arranging, orchestration, and composing for various projects and is also a director, music director and performer.

**Jack Lechner** (Lyricist, *The Kid*), Andy Monroe (Composer), and Michael Zam (Bookwriter) received the 2009 Jerry Bock Award and a 2010 GLAAD Media Award nomination for *The Kid*, which premiered at the Acorn Theater in New York in May 2010. The show is adapted from the memoir by sex columnist Dan Savage, creator of the "It Gets Better" project. Jack Lechner writes lyrics, produces for film and TV, teaches film at NYU, constructs puzzles, and sometimes

writes books (including *Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You* and *Mary Had A Little Lamp*). His credits as an executive producer include *Blue Valentine* (Oscar nominee), *Girls Who Like Boys Who Like Boys*, *The Fog Of War* (Oscar winner), *Left Of The Dial* (Emmy nominee), *Sunset Daze*, *Parking Lot*, *Very Young Girls*, *Naked On the Inside*, *Smile 'Til It Hurts*, and the upcoming *Growing Small*. He was a producer on the pilot for *Mad Men*, and an executive on such films as *The Crying Game*, *Good Will Hunting*, and *The Full Monty*. He is a member of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theater Workshop, where he received the 2004 Jerry Harrington Award.

**Marisa Michelson** (Composer, *Tamar and the River*) composes with a particular emphasis on exploring the voice as a multi-faceted instrument of human expression. Her work includes book and music for *Tamar and the River* (commissioned by the Signature Theatre thanks to the Shen Family Foundation Next Generation grant, written with Joshua H. Cohen) which had its workshop production last summer and is slated for Signature's 2012 season; *Still Life with Toe Shoes* (Old Deerfield Productions; production Musical Theatre Society of Emerson College); *Hotel Sarajevo* (CAP 21, hotInk Festival, Smith College), and commissioned one-acts for NYC's Prospect Theatre Company. In May, 2010, Marisa was commissioned with playwright Jason Grote by Montclair University's New Works Institute to write *Scheherezade* - a musical adaptation of Grote's play, *1001*. She is the winner of the 2006 St. Botolph Award for Composition and a Global Arts Village grant to study Indian Hindustani Singing in India. She was a proud participant in the New Dramatists Composer-Librettist Studio, Theatreworks Palo Alto's 2011 writers residency, and Earthdance's 2011 "eMerge" interdisciplinary artists residency in Western Massachusetts. Marisa sang with Meredith Monk in *Songs of Ascension* at BAM, and will be singing in Daria Fain's Phoneme Choir. She teaches singing through Soyulla artists and privately in Washington Heights.

**Andy Monroe** (Composer, *The Kid*), Jack Lechner (Lyricist), and Michael Zam (Bookwriter) received the 2009 Jerry Bock Award and a 2010 GLAAD Media Award nomination for *The Kid*, which premiered at the Acorn Theater in New York in May 2010. The show is adapted from the memoir by sex columnist Dan Savage, creator of the "It Gets Better" project. Andy Monroe is currently writing book, music, and lyrics for an original musical called *Drive*. He wrote music and lyrics for *The Tragic And Horrible Life Of The Singing Nun* (book and additional lyrics by Blair Fell), which was presented in the 2006 New York Musical Theater Festival. He has twice participated in the 4@15 program at the York Theatre, which produced his short musicals *Sally Peaches* in April 2009, and *Elevator Music* in March 2011. Andy's short musical *The Life And Times Of Joe Jefferson Benjamin Blow* has been produced regionally. With lyricist Jack Lechner, he wrote a song for the HBO special *A Family Is A Family Is a Family*, which was performed by Rosie O'Donnell. He is the recipient of the 2001 BMI Foundation Jerry Harrington Musical Theater Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement, and was a 2007-8 Dramatists Guild Fellow.

**Michael Zam** (Bookwriter, *The Kid*), Andy Monroe (Composer), and Jack Lechner (Lyricist) received the 2009 Jerry Bock Award and a 2010 GLAAD Media Award nomination for *The Kid*, which premiered at the Acorn Theater in New York in May 2010. The show is adapted from the memoir by sex columnist Dan Savage, creator of the "It Gets Better" project. Michael Zam is a screenwriter whose recent credits include *Best Actress*, in development with Plan B, which was featured on the 2009 Black List of best unproduced screenplays; *Wife Vs. Ninja* for DreamWorks; a remake of the Jerry Lewis classic *The Family Jewels* (all with Jaffe Cohen); and *Selfish & Perverse* for director Jerry Mitchell. Michael teaches screenwriting at NYU and Modern British Drama at NYU in London (Teaching Excellence Award, 1998 and 2007). He also created the successful Professional Certificate in Screenwriting, the first on the East Coast. He is a former American Film Institute Fellow, and an alumnus of BMI's Librettists Workshop.

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