

'Little Miss Sunshine' and 'American Psycho' Musicals Get Starry New York Readings

By PATRICK HEALY
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Arts Beat

Two closely watched musicals under development - stage adaptations of the film "Little Miss Sunshine" and of the novel-turned-movie "American Psycho" - have been moving forward recently, theater executives familiar with both projects said on Tuesday.

La Jolla Playhouse, which produced the world premiere of "Little Miss Sunshine" last spring, held a private reading this month of a revised script for the musical, which had drawn mixed reviews in California, according to one of the executives, who is not involved with the show. Tony Award nominees Raul Esparza ("Speed-the-Plow," "Company") and Sherie Rene Scott ("Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown") were among the actors who joined in the reading, which was overseen by James Lapine (who wrote the book and also directed the production at La Jolla). William Finn ("Falsettos") wrote the music and lyrics.

A spokeswoman for La Jolla did not have an immediate comment on Tuesday about whether there were any plans for a new production of "Little Miss Sunshine." Given the relative paucity of original musicals set to open on Broadway during the 2011-12 season, New York theater insiders have been keeping an eye on the show, about a family of lovable misfits on a road trip so a young daughter can take part in a beauty pageant. The crowd-pleasing film was nominated for four Academy Awards, including best picture, in 2007.

The creators of the "American Psycho" musical, which is chiefly based on the 1991 satiric thriller by Bret Easton Ellis, are having a workshop this week, with plans to hold a private presentation for theater producers and artists on Friday, according to two theater executives familiar with the workshop and planning to attend the presentation.

The show has music and lyrics by Duncan Sheik ("Spring Awakening") and a book by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, a playwright and television writer who worked on the artistic overhaul of "Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark" last spring.

Leading the cast will be Benjamin Walker, who played the title character in the critically admired musical "Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson" on Broadway last season; he will portray the Wall Street executive and bloodthirsty murderer Patrick Bateman in the workshop, which will be directed by Rupert Goold ("Enron").

Among the other actors in the workshop are Reeve Carney (who plays the title character in "Spider-Man"), Christopher Hanke (the current revival of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying"), Kacie Sheik ("Hair") and Libby Winters ("American Idiot")."

"American Psycho" was also made into a film, released in 2000, starring Christian Bale as Bateman. The executives familiar with the workshop said they did not know enough about the music and script to assess its strength or determine if the material was on track toward a production. Playbill.com first reported the "American Psycho" workshop.