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# Sprecher, Forlenza go Global

## Duo partner on producing org

By GORDON COX

Producers Ben Sprecher and Louise Forlenza have formally partnered to form Global Broadway Prods. Inc., a producing org created to fund the development of three tuners.

Trio of musicals are "Little House on the Prairie" -- set to preem at Minneapolis' Guthrie Theater later this summer -- plus an adaptation of Daphne du Maurier novel "Rebecca" and a new Frank Wildhorn tuner, "Havana."

Global Broadway raises the capital for these projects' developmental costs, which Sprecher estimates to be about \$1.85 million for "Little House" and in the range of \$1.5 million-\$2 million for "Rebecca," a new English-language version of a German-language hit that bowed in a 2006 production still running in Vienna. (Another outpost is currently playing in Tokyo.)

Global Broadway will likely pony up around \$500,000 for its 25% share of the development coin for "Havana," a co-production with Kathleen Raitt, William Franzblau and Jerry Frankel. With music by Wildhorn ("Jekyll & Hyde") and lyrics by Jack Murphy ("The Civil War"), the politically charged romance is set during the run-up to Castro's takeover of Cuba. Pulitzer winner Nilo Cruz ("Anna and the Tropics")

provides the book.

Global Broadway's capital comes from a group of investors whose coin develops all three shows.

"The money for development is the riskiest money, but it has a much better position when a project goes to the next level," Sprecher said.

Once development of each musical is complete, additional funds will be raised for full productions. Sprecher estimates the complete capitalization cost of "Little House" at \$8 million, with both "Rebecca" and "Havana" likely coming in at around \$15 million each.

Although "Little House" does not open until Aug. 15 in Minneapolis, the musical got off to a promising start earlier this summer by breaking box office records at the Guthrie. Melissa Gilbert, who began her career in the long-running TV version of the "Little House" property, stars as Ma in the musical incarnation, which has a book by Rachel Sheinkin ("The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"), music by Rachel Portman and lyrics by Donna di Novelli. Francesca Zambello ("The Little Mermaid"), also attached to "Rebecca," helms.

"Little House" aims to land on the Rialto later this season. "Rebecca," which does not yet have an English-language adaptor attached, will target a spring 2010 Broadway start date, with "Havana" coming in fall 2010.

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