

Inspired by real-life twins, *Invincible* is a magical musical tale that turns our notions of princesses and disabilities upside down, with a character in a wheelchair as a heroine. With a Pixar sensibility, it's a sophisticated coming-of-age story of a brave and adventurous princess with a physical disability and her sister who, although able-bodied, is riddled with fear and anxiety. Together, they lead their family and the audience on an exciting adventure of facing fears, challenging limits, and discovering how to be Invincible. www.invinciblethemusical.com.

Invincible is Ladybug Productions' first developmental project. Jill Lesser and Sally Rosenberg formed Ladybug after joining The Inner Circle. That group and Ken Davenport bolstered their belief in their own possibilities as producers; indeed, this summer, Ladybug became a co-producer of Ken's Broadway play, *Gettin' The Band Back Together*, and exceeded the fundraising goal in a lightning-fast three months.

Since investing in theater is also investing in people, backing Jill and Sally is a particularly good bet. They continually demonstrate that they get things done. Alongside developing *Invincible* and launching Ladybug, Jill runs Women Against Alzheimer's, a non-profit focusing public and policymaker attention on Alzheimer's as a growing women's health crisis. She began this work after 20 years as a technology policy expert and senior tech executive. She currently sits on the board of Levine Music, a community music school in Washington, DC. Sally is a Deputy General Counsel for a global law firm, serves on two non-profit boards, Imagination Stage (President Emeritus) and KIDMuseum, and authors novels for young people, including the middle grade novel, *Invincible*, upon which the musical is based. They are lifelong theater enthusiasts. Jill has an aspiring actor son, a mother who had a second career as a playwright, and a father who is board finance chair of a Brooklyn non-profit theater. Sally's primary extracurricular activity through college was theater: acting, producing, and directing.

Invincible's creative team merits investment as well. Composer and lyricist, Mark Sonnenblick, is a 2018 recipient of the Jonathan Larson Award and is the book writer, composer and lyricist for *Midnight at the Never Get* now playing at the York Theatre Off-Broadway. www.marksonnenblick.com. Bookwriter, Maggie Herskowitz, was the recipient of a 2016 Drama League Residency for her play *The Great Big Blue* (playwright) and materials from her musical *Loch Lomond* (book & lyrics) were chosen by the National Alliance for Musical Theater to be on display at their 2018 Fall Conference. www.maggieherskowitz.com. Director Jeff Whiting was recently acclaimed as a "director with a joyous touch" by the *New York Times* with work on Broadway, television, special events and concerts around the world. www.jeffwhiting.com.

Before joining The Inner Circle, *Invincible* the musical had a full script and score, Jeff Whiting on board, and multiple table reads under its belt. Those readings informed that the content needed to “age up” in order to appeal to a wide audience. The Inner Circle and Ken coached the Ladybugs to establish deadlines and schedule collaborative sessions. They also shared critical content guidance, including Ken Davenport’s advice that “every musical needs a love element” and the need to adapt the novel’s plot to a theatrically-effective one, including commencing the girls’ journey at the show’s beginning. The result is a significantly evolved plot, with a completely new libretto and plans for multiple new songs, with further development to come in preparation for a February 2019 industry reading.

Bringing *Invincible* to fruition is so important at this moment. Broadway is overdue for a musical that presents a character with a physical disability in a heroic role along with one who raises the concomitant but often overlooked challenges of debilitating anxiety. *Curious Incident* demonstrated that broad audiences are ready for theater and entertainment to delve into the realm of cognitive disability. *Invincible* will further advance our sensibilities and sensitivity to physical and emotional hurdles. A family magical musical can have incredible impact on young people and their parents. We have seen *Wicked*, *Anastasia*, *Mean Girls*, and soon *The Prom*, present adolescent females in strong roles. It’s time for ones with disabilities to capture audiences’ imaginations.

Of note, another remarkable outgrowth of participating in The Inner Circle is that the Ladybugs participated in a pitch night which resulted in a Broadway producer expressing interest in joining the *Invincible* production team. He already has provided meaningful developmental input; his participation is confirmation that this project will attract support.

Finally, there is a broad audience of people who would find themselves or their loved ones represented in this musical. There are 2.2 million Americans using wheelchairs for day to day tasks and more than one quarter of teens 13 to 18 have an anxiety disorder. And the large activist disability community is always looking to promote stories of perseverance and possibilities.

Pixar has brought us *Brave* and *Inside Out*. Broadway can give us our first heroine who uses a wheelchair for mobility, her twin who faces down anxiety, and a most special horse, *Invincible*.