

Bucknell University Department of Theatre and Dance presents



merrily we roll along

Harvey Powers Theatre, Coleman Hall

April 9, 11, 12, 13 at 8 p.m.

April 10 at 2 p.m. 1999

Chronology and Musical Numbers

act one

prologue: schenley high school — 1980
"the hills of tomorrow"

scene one: bel air, california — 1976
"that frank"
"good thing going"

scene two: nbc studios, new york city — 1973
"old friends" / "like it was"
"franklin shepard, inc."

scene three: frank's apartment, new york city — 1968
"old friends"
"growing up - part 1"
"growing up - part 2"

scene four: manhattan courthouse, new york city — 1967
"not a day goes by"
"now you know"

Intermission

act two

scene one: alvin theatre, new york city — 1964
"act two - opening"
"it's a hit"

scene two: gussie and joe's brownstone, new york city — 1962
"the blob - part 1"
"the blob - part 2"
"growing up"
"the blob - part 3"
"good thing going"
"the blob - part 4"

scene three: the downtown club, new york city — 1960
"bobby and jackie and jack"
"not a day goes by - part 2"

scene four: new york city — 1957-1959
"opening doors"

scene five: a rooftop on 110th street, new york city
"our time - part 1"
"our time - part 2"
"our time - part 3"

epilogue: schenley high school — 1955

Director's Notes

In my work, I enjoy doing little-known pieces by well-known artists. Most people know Sondheim for his Tony-award winning Broadway hits. With *Merrily*, I thought that we might show another more personal side of this remarkable artist. Here is a story of a deep but fragile friendship subjected to all of the trials of contemporary life. Like Ibsen or Chekhov or any of the most innovative playwrights, Sondheim's musicals expose the issues of our times — the effect of living your private life in the public eye, the struggle for success, the pitfalls of fame and the personal challenge to live life with integrity and compassion. In addition, with *Merrily*, Sondheim writes a complex metatheatrical musical drama, a musical about making musicals, more straightforwardly autobiographical than most musical theatre and simultaneously challenging the audience on an emotional and intellectual level.

Based on the Kaufman and Hart comedy of the same name, time in *Merrily* runs backwards. We meet Franklin Shepard, the protagonist, at age 50 in his horrible mid-life crises. Then, as he gets younger, we arrive with the end of the play at the dawn of his youthful idealism, made bittersweet by the knowledge of where his life's mistaken choices have taken him. As we roll along through Franklin's smooth and bumpy roads, the singer-actors in *Merrily*'s transitions, like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, testify that Sondheim's music offers a moment of self reflection.

Dramaturg's Notes

In 1965, composer Ned Rorem remembers meeting Stephen Sondheim at a party, one at which, Rorem recalls, "I got really drunk." As Rorem left, so did Sondheim. Together they went down in the elevator, then shared a cab downtown where Sondheim invited Rorem to have a drink. "Something happened," recalled Rorem, "I don't know what it was. Something bad. I do remember I said to him," and here he laughed, "Oh, are you a composer?"

Fiercely admired by the music and theatre communities, but hardly a household name, such is the dilemma faced by Stephen Sondheim. In 1946, Sondheim entered Williams College intending to major in mathematics. He graduated in 1950 magna cum laude, and studied with composer Milton Babbitt. The next several years found Sondheim writing episodes of the CBS television series "Topper," and in 1955 his first effort for Broadway fell through when the producer died. Lucky for us. In 1956, Leonard Bernstein asked Sondheim to write lyrics for *West Side Story*. You might say the rest is history. And what a history it is.

Sondheim next wrote lyrics for Arthur Laurent's book of *Gypsy*. In 1962, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, the first major Broadway production with lyrics and music by Sondheim, opened. The following year, *Forum* won the Tony Award for Best Musical. During his forty-plus years in show business, Sondheim has collected Grammys, Oscars, Tonys, even a Pulitzer. He has been the recipient of a Kennedy Center Honor and the National

Medal of Arts. March 12th of this year, Sondheim received the coveted American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers' Founders' Award for his significant contribution to the prevalence of music around the world. We as an audience are probably more familiar with the titles of the works than we are with the composer himself. *Company*, *Into the Woods*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Assassins*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Merrily We Roll Along* are just some of the works Sondheim has had a major hand in creating.

So why do Lerner and Lowe, Rodgers and Hammerstein and Andrew Lloyd Webber come to our minds more readily than Sondheim? Perhaps, because out of all the composers and creators of the musical theatre genre in the last 80 years, Sondheim is a true modernist. For Sondheim, content dictates the form that the work must take. Rather than relying on available models of musical comedy, Sondheim composes with the uniqueness of the text in mind rather than writing for what an audience might perceive as popular. The results are strange and wonderful journeys through woods, fascinating examinations of peoples lives, intrigues with presidential assassins, soldiers, lawyers and lovers. Most of all are the songs. Lyrics that are at once biting and tender. Music that is bold and touching. The Sondheim history. Isn't it rich?

Biographies

GARY GRANT {direction} is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at Bucknell. In his theatrical productions, Gary tries to collaborate with musicians, dancers and movement specialists and he welcomes this remarkable opportunity to work on *Merrily* with our talented musical director and choreographer. His musical theatre productions include satirist Christopher Durang's only musical, *A History of the American Film*, with music by Mel Marvin, and Cuban playwright Maria Irene Fornes's *Promenade*, with music by the Off-Off Broadway legend, Al Carmines. He directed Sam Shepard's *Tooth of Crime*, with music by Dave Ames and the Groove Tools, which toured to a regional ACTF festival and worked with a jazz saxophonist and percussionist in Shepard's *Angel City* which toured to the Kennedy Center. In other productions, he has worked with musicians from Chile, Japan and Africa, and has directed for the Lewisburg Opera Company, the Bucknell Opera Company and the Pittsburgh Opera Workshop.

JAMES RYAN {musical direction} is originally from St. Louis and is now based in central New Jersey, working throughout Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey. Most recently, Jim musically directed *Pippin* and *Once on this Island* for the University of Pennsylvania; *Sweeney Todd*, *West Side Story*, *Into the Woods*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, in which he played the role of Joseph, *Anyone Can Whistle*, which he co-produced and directed, and *Carousel*, in which he also played the role of Billy Bigelow. Jim is thrilled to be working with the talented staff and students of Bucknell University.

ALLYSON GREEN {choreography} received a B.F.A. from Washington University in New York. Based in New York since 1986, she has performed world wide with numerous choreographers, including Yoshiko Chuma, Bill Young, Randy Warshaw, Charles Moulton, Jose Navas, Doug Varone and many others. Her choreography has been presented in a wide variety of venues in Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Portugal, Venezuela and the U.S. Allyson is also a visual artist in painting and graphic design, as well as an adjunct professor at Bucknell University, teaching classes in modern dance and contact improvisation. She has created four commissioned works for the Bucknell Dance Company, funded by the Bucknell Association for the Arts. This summer will take her to Macedonia for a project with actors and dancers from Serbia, Croatia and Greece, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Allyson would like to thank the whole *Merrily* gang; she has had a blast!

ELAINE WILLIAMS {scene design} designs extensively for theatre and dance, and teaches classes in the areas of scene and costume design and history. She is an Affiliated Artist with the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble and has also designed for the Georgia Shakespeare Festival, Horizon Theatre, Theatre in the Square and Theatre Gael in Atlanta and Stage One: The Louisville Children's Theatre. Elaine's special interests are puppetry and masks, and designing interactive performance environments. Recent collaborations with directors at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta have produced several original adaptations from literary works, including *Frankenstein* for the Cultural Olympiad.

HEATH HANSUM {lighting design} has an M.F.A. in lighting design and technical direction from the University of Iowa. Heath teaches computer-aided design, lighting and sound design and is a member of IATSE Local 636. He was also production manager for the San Francisco Opera productions of *The Elixir of Love*, *The Aspern Papers* and *The Barber of Seville*. Heath has worked with BMI Supply, installing performance rigging systems in New York and Pennsylvania, and serves as a sound engineer for the Williamsport Community Arts Center.

HEATHER LONG {costume design} received her B.A. from Hampshire College in 1996. Since then she has worked at the Barter Theatre in Virginia, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Theatreworks in California, Costume Works in Boston and the Italia Conte Drama Academy in London. While overseas, her costume designs were presented at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. She plans to attend graduate school after completing her internship at Bucknell.

DAVID B. AMES {dramaturg} is a Lewisburg based artist-musician whose creative partnership with Gary Grant is in its 11th year. In their last collaboration, David composed and performed an original score and created the sound design for their adaptation of Euripides' *Electra*. Since 1988, David has contributed sound designs, original music, sound effects, direction and technical production to nearly sixty productions at Bucknell, including extensive design and produc-

tion work with the Bucknell Dance Company. As a camera assistant/gaffer, his work has been seen on PBS's "American Masters," "Nova" and the FOX network. As a sound engineer, David has worked with numerous acts, such as Gordon Lightfoot, the Coasters, the Platters, the Drifters, Diamond Rio, Watchdog, Jorma Kaukonen, the David Rose Band, Townes Van Zandt, Kelly Township and Perforated Head. David was the Resident Sound Designer and Company Manager for the Media Theatre for the Performing Arts in Media, PA. He has been an actor, director, producer, writer and has toured as a bass guitarist with Jello Wrestlers and the Groove Tools. David is also the co-founder of the LO-FI Air Ensemble, a radio performance group.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Technical Director	Heath Hansum
Assistant Technical Director	Ashley Elder
Stage Manager	Mary Kokie
Assistant Stage Managers	Allison Bagby
	Sharon Savage
Dance Captain	Kristy Kuhn
Scenic and Lighting Crew	Eric Charles, Fred Stillman
	Rodney Young, Brian Bishop, Charles Crosby, George Gibbons
Sound	Karen Forgione
Props and Paint Crew	Christopher Scholl, Rachel Ziegler
	Sarah Endyke, Elizabeth Asti
Light Board Operator	Megan Sommerfield
Sound Board Operator	Rodney Young
Costume Design Intern	Heather Long
Costumer	Pam Miller
Costumes	Mary Kokie, Kelly Lybolt
	Marilyn Smith, Amanda Young, Patricia McGrath
Makeup	Julia Lehman
Publicity and Box Office	Eileen Kennedy, Krista McCabe
	Jason Seymour
Running Crew	Charles Crosby, Andrew Baldwin, Raiko Kamiyama,
	Robin D. Jennings, Linda Ha, Erika Loker, Trisha McGrath
Ushers	Provided by Cap and Dagger
House Manager	Donald E. Jones II
Poster and Program Design	David B. Ames

At the time this program was printed, a complete list of the production staff was unavailable. We would like to thank all those without whose help this show would not be possible.

merrily we roll along

also featured in tonight's performance

Terry.....**Alissa Yatchko**

Meg Kincaid.....**Amy Wilson**

We apologize for the omission
in the program.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Bucknell Dance Company Spring Performance
Friday, April 23rd, and Saturday, 24th, at 8:30 p.m.
Weis Center for the Performing Arts

Bucknell