
THEATRE ROW

410 West 42nd Street



NICHOLAS VISELLI
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

PRESENTS

NEIL SIMON'S
I Ought To Be In
PICTURES

WRITTEN BY NEIL SIMON

STARRING

MAKENZIE MORGAN GOMEZ PAMELA SABAUGH CHRIS THORN

SCENIC & LIGHTING DESIGN
BERT SCOTT

COSTUME DESIGN
LIV MAGARACI

SOUND DESIGN
ERIC NIGHTENGALE

PROPS DESIGN
PAUL BIRTWISTLE

PROJECTION DESIGN
SAMUEL J. BIONDOLILLO & BERT SCOTT

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
CHRISTINE CATTI

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER
JULIANNE MENASSIAN

CO-PRODUCTION MANAGERS
ERIC NIGHTENGALE & NOAH GLAISTER

GENERAL MANAGER
STEVE ASHER

CASTING
ANDREA ZEE, ZEE CASTING

PRESS REPRESENTATIVE
JT PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIRECTED BY
NICHOLAS VISELLI

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Libby MAKENZIE MORGAN GOMEZ
Steffy PAMELA SABAUGH
Herb CHRIS THORN

TIME: May 1980

PLACE: West Hollywood, CA

All performances will be open captioned and audio described.

SCENES

SETTING

A small bungalow in West Hollywood, CA

ACT I

Scene 1 The bungalow, 9:00 in the morning
Scene 2 Later that evening

ACT II

Scene 1 Two weeks later
Scene 2 Midnight
Scene 3 About 3 hours later
Scene 4 Sunday morning, a few days later



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Dear Friends,

Welcome back to the theatre! As you all know, theatre is a shared human experience. It is made and managed by dedicated, caring people. All the professionals working in this theatre are there to help you. They are trained and knowledgeable, and want you to have the best experience at the show.

We know some of you have been away from our theatres for some time, and we welcome you back with open arms. As audience members, you are essential to this theatrical experience—the show could not go on without you. You are an important part of the show by helping maintain the sanctity of this space.

SO TO HELP YOU (AND THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU)
HAVE THE BEST TIME, WE PLEASE ASK THAT YOU:

- Always cooperate with the ushers and front-of-house staff. They are there to help you, keep an orderly environment, and ensure the show begins as scheduled.
- Turn off your cell phones. All the way off...
- Unwrap all candies now and refrain from loud eating during the performance.
- Treat all theatre staff you see with respect and kindness. They want you to have a great time, and they deserve respect and a positive work environment.
- Be engaged in the show! But also be respectful of the people around you and do not make any overly disruptive comments.
- Do not sing along with the actors. It distracts your fellow theatregoers and is not thoughtful.
- Do not engage with the actors or musicians working in the show. Only engage if they encourage you to, and please do not distract them at any time during the performance.
- Stop drinking alcohol immediately if you're feeling tipsy. Drink some water.
- Be patient with the restroom lines. We know they're long and space is tight. But do not become pushy or rude. Everyone will get their turn.
- Relax, sit back, and enjoy the show! Once again, we would not be here without you.

Sincerely,
Philip S. Birsh
President and Chairman
Playbill Inc

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

THEATER BREAKING THROUGH BARRIERS. TBTB is the only Off-Broadway theatre company, and one of the few theatres in the country, dedicated to advancing and celebrating the work of professional artists with disabilities. Founded in 1979 by Ike Schambelan as Theater by the Blind, an integrated company, mixing blind, low vision and sighted vision in their work, TBTB expanded their mission in 2008 to include artists of all disabilities and changed its name to Theater Breaking Through Barriers, retaining its TBTB acronym. Disability is the only diversity that cuts across all racial, gender, social and class distinctions. Disability knows no age, race, religion, gender, culture or sexual orientation. As such, we view disability as a common ground, where the voices from every sector of our society can come together to be represented and expressed.

MAKENZIE MORGAN GOMEZ (*Libby*). Off-Broadway debut! Tour and regional: Poquito Tito in *SkippyJon Jones* (TWUSA), Regina in *Rock of Ages* (SRT), Ellen in *Little Dog Laughed* (SRT). NYC festivals and readings: Van's Sister in *Dog Sees God* (The Barrow Group), *Mind the Gap* (NYTW), *22 the Play* (Hudson Guild Theater) and *Honeysuckle Epidemic* (TADA! Theater). I'd like to thank everyone who's championed me to go after my dreams: my family in CA, my chosen family here in NYC, my girlfriend, Diana. Special shout out to my mentor, Jen Waldman, for helping me embrace my newfound disability-informed artistry. BFA in musical theatre from Boston Conservatory. Proud AEA member. Socials: @makenziemorgangomez.

PAMELA SABAUGH (*Steffy*). Off-Broadway: *Richard III* (NY Classical Theatre); *Molly Sweeney* (Keen Company); *Brecht on Brecht, Fourth Wall, The Healing, Unexpected Guest, Merchant of Venice, Rules of Charity, Hamlet...* (Theater Breaking Through Barriers). New York: BAM, The Huron Club, Primary Stages, PS 122. Regional: *Dying City* (The Adrienne); *Romeo & Juliet, Macbeth* (Shakespeare Theatre NJ); *Chicago* (Court Theatre Chicago); *Voice of the Prairie* (Attic Theatre). TV/film/other: "The Helen Keller Exorcism," *Lefty & Loosey, Goldberg P.I., One Angry Man*, "What Would You Do?," "One Life to Live," "Guiding Light." Writer/composer/performer: *Immaculate Degeneration*. Princess Grace Award recipient. MFA in acting from Rutgers University.

CHRIS THORN (*Herb*). Broadway: *Death of a Salesman* (2022), *Bernhardt/Hamlet* (Roundabout). Off-Broadway: *Greater Clements* (Lincoln Center), *Pride and Prejudice* (Primary Stages), *Twelfth Night* (Pig Iron), *Miss Lily Gets Boned* (Studio 42), *King John* (NY Shakespeare Exchange), *The Bird and the Two-Ton Weight* (EST), *The Most Damaging Wound* (The Production Co., NYIT Award nomination). Regional: The Acting Company, Merrimack Rep, The Guthrie, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, CATF, Barrington Stage, Delaware Theatre Company, Fulton Theatre Company, TheaterWorks Hartford, Boston Playwrights'. TV: "Madam Secretary," "Evil," "The Good Fight," "The Girls on the Bus." Training: Boston University BFA; University of Idaho MFA. He is a native of South Berwick, ME.

NEIL SIMON (*Author*). The world's most beloved playwright, his works include *Come*

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WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Blow Your Horn; Little Me; Barefoot in the Park; The Odd Couple; Sweet Charity; The Star-Spangled Girl; Plaza Suite; Promises, Promises; Last of the Red Hot Lovers; The Gingerbread Lady; The Prisoner of Second Avenue; The Sunshine Boys; The Good Doctor; God's Favorite; California Suite; Chapter Two; They're Playing Our Song; I Ought to Be in Pictures; Fools; Brighton Beach Memoirs; Biloxi Blues; The Odd Couple (female version); Broadway Bound; Rumors; Lost in Yonkers; Jake's Women; The Goodbye Girl; Laughter on the 23rd Floor; London Suite; Proposals; Hotel Suite; The Dinner Party; 45 Seconds From Broadway; Oscar and Felix; and Rose's Dilemma; as well as the motion pictures *After the Fox, The Out-of-Towners, The Heartbreak Kid, Murder by Death, The Cheap Detective, Seems Like Old Times, Only When I Laugh, Max Dugan Returns, The Slugger's Wife and The Marrying Man;* and the books *Rewrites and The Play Goes On.* His plays won numerous Tony Awards and he received the Pulitzer Prize.

NICHOLAS VISELLI (*Director*) is the artistic director of Theater Breaking Through Barriers, New York City's only Off-Broadway theatre company dedicated to advancing the work of performers, writers and directors with disabilities. As an actor, director, sound designer, administrator and core company member since 1997, Mr. Viselli has acted in more than 22 TBTB productions and has produced and coordinated several of TBTB's international tours, including their visits to Japan to attend both the Bird International Theatre Festival and Japan's National Festival for People with Disabilities. Most recently, he directed TBTB's critically acclaimed 2023 revival production of Yasmin Reza's *God of*

Carnage, and was voted by New York City's Off Broadway Alliance as one of their 2023 Legends of Off-Broadway. He studied at the Royal National Theatre in London and is a graduate of Hofstra University.

CHRISTINE CATTI (*Production Stage Manager*). Recent productions include *The Ragtime 25th Reunion Concert* (as SM) and *Invincible the Musical*. Other credits include Radio City Music Hall: *Christmas Spectacular*. Broadway: *Judgment at Nuremberg*. Off-Broadway: *Becoming Dr. Ruth, In & Of Itself, Gigantic, Atomic, Love and Information, Nothing to Hide*, among many others. At the Bay Street Theater she has worked on *Ragtime, Windfall* and *Camelot*. She has worked internationally and on tour.

JULIANNE MENASSIAN she/her (*Assistant Stage Manager*). Select credits: Off-Broadway: *Foxes, The Habit of Art, The Best We Could, Midnight at the Never Get, Unexpected Joy*. Tours: *Pretty Woman the Musical, Once on This Island, Love Never Dies, Finding Neverland*. Regional: *Bhangin' It, Freaky Friday* (La Jolla Playhouse); *Darling Grenadine* (Goodspeed Musicals); *Freaky Friday, Blackbeard, Girlstar* (Signature Theatre); *Freaky Friday* (Alley Theatre, Cleveland Play House); *Bad Jews* (Studio Theatre). TV: "Halston," "Saturday in the Park," "Studio Sessions." Love to my family and friends!

BERT SCOTT (*Scenic & Lighting Designer*). Previously for TBTB: *God of Carnage, Brecht on Brecht, Ten Little Indians, When I'm 64, Oedipus, Hamlet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Rules of Charity, Romeo and Juliet, The Cocktail Hour, The Middle Ages, A Nervous Smile, Bass for Picasso, The*

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WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Merchant of Venice, *According to Goldman*, *The Unexpected Guest*, *The Artificial Jungle* and *The Fourth Wall*. Regional/other: Orlando Rep, Orlando Shakespeare Theatre, Florida Rep, North Shore Music Theatre, Theatre by the Sea, Stages St. Louis, The Mark Twain Playhouse, North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, Triad Stage, The Opera Company of Philadelphia, Nickelodeon and Norwegian Cruise Lines. Bert holds a BS in electrical engineering from Virginia Tech, an MFA in theatre design from UNC-Greensboro and is a professor of theatre and coordinator of the theatre design and technology program at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. bertscott.com

LIV MAGARACI (*Costume Designer*) is a recent graduate from Long Island University Post. She is so excited to be making her costume design debut on *I Ought to Be in Pictures*. Previously she has worked on *Indian Summer* (Bay Street Theater) as the associate costume designer, as well as designed *My Sorrybird* (Post Theatre Company). She is currently working as a dresser on *A Sign of the Times* (New World Stages). Thanks go out to the company of Theater Breaking Through Barriers for creating such a welcoming environment. Special thanks and much love to her friends and family for all of their support.

ERIC NIGHTENGALE (*Sound Designer/Co-Production Manager*) is a founding member of Concrete Temple Theatre, The Acme Corporation and Anthropological Theatricals. He served as artistic director of 78th Street Theatre Lab from 1995 thru 2008. Technical credits include work with Keen Company, PS21, Playfactory Manbangzen, Mason Holdings, Penguin Rep, The Brick, 59E59, Dixon Place, Minetta Lane, La Mama, The Acting Company, Symphony Space, Cherry Lane Theatre, St. Clement's, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The Barrow Group, HERE and Classic Stage Company. Chicago credits include work with Victory Gardens Theatre, Bailiwick Repertory Theatre, Steppenwolf, Chicago Dramatists Workshop and Second City.

PAUL BIRTWISTLE (*Props Designer*) is delighted to join TBTB for this production. Props design: *The Slow Dance* (59E59), *The Great Divide* (HERE Arts), *Heart Strings* (Atlantic for Kids). Selected props artisan: *Days of Wine and Roses*, *The Far Country*, *The Bedwetter* (Atlantic); *Downstate*, *Corsicana* (Playwrights Horizons); *american*

(*tele*)visions (NYTW); *Epiphany* (LCT). Props associate at the Manhattan School of Music. BA: Bennington College. Love to Lily.

SAM BIONDOLILLO (*Projection Designer*) is an award-winning New York City-based lighting and projection designer for theatre, dance and television. Recent credits include Off-Broadway: *Love + Science* (lighting and projections), *God of Carnage* (lighting and projections), *How to Live*, *Brilliance*, *Brecht on Brecht* (projections), *Geek! The Musical*, New York Dance & Musical Festival. Regional: *Cabaret*, *Rocky Horror Show*, *For the Fish* (Moonbox Productions); *Blood at the Root*, *Shakespeare in Love* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre); *Annapurna*, *The Pitman Painters* (Vermont Stage). Sam is an assistant professor of design at Connecticut College. He holds an MFA in design from the University of Connecticut and a BA in theatre arts from Boston College. Website: SJBLightingDesign.com.

NOAH GLAISTER (*Co-Production Manager*) is a recent graduate of Point Park University with a concentration in scenic design. He is thrilled to be production managing this Neil Simon classic. His most recent design credits include *Sense and Sensibility* (Pittsburgh Playhouse), *Hero: The Boy From Troy* (Pittsburgh CLO), *Cinderella* (Pittsburgh Playhouse), *The Drag* (Bridges Theatre Company); *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* (Pittsburgh CLO), *Angels in America* (Pittsburgh Playhouse), *Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Pittsburgh Playhouse) and *Chimerica* (Quantum Theatre). He would like to thank Nick, Eric and the entire cast, crew and creative team for creating such an amazing show for you all to see.

ANDREA ZEE (*Casting*). Upcoming: *The 39 Steps* at Virginia Theatre Festival and *Sweeney Todd* at Portland Center Stage. Off-Broadway/NYC: *Romeo and Juliet* (NAATCO); *A Delicate Balance* (NAATCO/Transport Group); *Our Man in Santiago*; *Golden Shield* (MTC); *Where the Wild Things Are* (New Victory); *Neurosis*; *Syncing Ink*; New York Stage and Film; Dramatists Guild Foundation. National tours: *Yemandja*, *The Sound of Music*, *Bullets Over Broadway*, *Elf the Musical*, *Finding Neverland*. Regional: Portland Center Stage, 5th Avenue Theatre, Two River Theater, Virginia Theatre Festival, Flat Rock Playhouse, Florida Studio Theatre, Arrow Rock Lyceum, Alley Theater, TUTS. Associate credits include numerous

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Broadway, film, television and commercial projects. zee-casting.com

STEVE ASHER (*General Manager/Marketing*) has been managing director of the Ridiculous Theatrical Company (Everett Quinton, artistic director) and executive director of both Labyrinth Theater Company (Philip Seymour Hoffman and John Ortiz, artistic directors) and Alumni and Friends of LaGuardia Arts. He was also director of special events at GMHC, where he produced fundraising concerts with the likes of Bette Midler, Celine Dion, Bernadette Peters, Patti LuPone, Donna Summer, Luther Vandross, Reba McEntire, Barry Manilow and many, many more, raising millions of dollars for AIDS services. He was lead producer of the Off-Broadway productions of *The Mystery of Irma Vep* (Lucille Lortel Award, Best Revival), *Pete 'n Keely* and *Boys Don't Wear Lipstick*.

JT PUBLIC RELATIONS (*Publicity*). JTPR is a full-service entertainment public relations firm founded by Joe Trentacosta, that has represented projects on Broadway,

Off-Broadway, regionally, national tours and special events. Recent: *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers*, *White Rose the Musical*, *The Night of the Iguana*, Patrick Olson's *Emergence*, Anthony Rapp's *Without You*, *Dog Man the Musical*. Theatre companies include Argyle Theatre, NJ Rep, Houses on the Moon, Royal Family Productions, La Femme Theatre Productions, Theater Breaking Through Barriers and Urban Stages. Joe is the executive producer of Katsura Sunshine's *Rakugo* (NWS), co-producer of *The Life and Slimes of Marc Summers* and co-conceiver/producer of the musical *Six Triple Eight*. He is the COO of Lillypops.com. ATPAM member.

PAUL GASCHLER (*Poster Art & Graphic Design*) creates show art and designs marketing collateral for theatrical productions. Favorites include *Make Me Gorgeous*; *Five: The Parody Musical*; *The Violet Hour*; *Everything's Fine* directed by John Lithgow. TBTB: *God of Carnage*. Palm Beach Dramaworks: *Twelve Angry Men*, *Death of a Salesman*. Paper Mill Playhouse: *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *After*

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Midnight, Fiddler on the Roof, Unmasked: The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber. NY City Center: *Grand Hotel*, Sondheim/Marsalis' *A Bed and a Chair*, *Violet* starring Sutton Foster, *A New Brain* starring Jonathan Groff. Graphis Gold Design Award and two-time PMP Rising Star Award winner. 11hourDesign.com

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Information in "Who's Who in the Cast" is provided by the production. Where opinions are expressed, they are those of the players, not necessarily those of PLAYBILL Magazine.

STAFF FOR NEIL SIMON'S I OUGHT TO BE IN PICTURES

Production Stage Manager Christine Catti
 Assistant Stage Manager Julianne Menassian
 Co-Production Managers Eric Nightengale,
 Noah Glaister
 Scenic Construction Hillbolic Arts & Carpentry
 Set Installation Ken Larson
 Master Electrician Paul Jones
 Projection Programmer/Engineer Ed Fogarty
 Assoc. Projection Designer Malcolm Foster
 Projections Apprentice Roman Munichello
 Projections Operator Ann Marie Morelli
 Wardrobe Supervisor Kayci Rudge
 Show Art/Graphic Design Paul Gaschler
 House Manager Neil Connelly

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Videographer Matthew Gurren
 Founding Artistic Director Ike Schambelan

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 Associate Box Office Coordinators Ella Baldwin,
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THE ACTORS AND STAGE MANAGERS EMPLOYED IN THIS PRODUCTION ARE MEMBERS OF ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION, THE UNION OF PROFESSIONAL ACTORS AND STAGE MANAGERS IN THE UNITED STATES.



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Michael & Kek Viselli
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Jean Leo & Richard Kuczkowski
Ellen Rakoff Levine
Gail & Robert Levine-Fried
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\$100–\$249

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Andrea Axelrod
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Ellen Barry
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Basche Reiner Family
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Jill Sowell
Brenda Spangenberg in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Jodi Sullivan in memory of Rose Mazzarella
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Xen Theophall & Christine Kallas in memory of Rose Mazzarella
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Joe Vincenzi in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Thomas Wierbowski in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Jo Winograd
Jaime Wolf

\$50–\$99

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Arthur Atkinson
Steve Asher in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Philip J. Allessio
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Joshua Bentley

Philip Bins
Ernie & JoAnn Bickers
Lewis Brower
Jim & Lori Comparo
Karen Cook
Helen Cox
Leslie Farragher
A. Flan
Patricia Foresman
Rina Forte
Erika Funke in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Fred Gltner
Stuart Green
Marion Heacock
Kathleen Histon
Anita Hollander
Lee Kalcheim
Deborah Kempf
Christina Kosyla
Richard Kowel
Barry Levine in honor of Sue Ferziger
Darren Ley in honor of Sue Ferziger
Jennifer Lindstrom
Frank & Joanne Marcario
Susan & Jeff Matula
Joe & Judi O'Borski in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Jennifer Ortega
J. Posner
Joan Rosenblatt
Carol Sandiford
Jaclyn Spechler
Robert L. Tortoriello
Maryanne Veshecco
Marc Veselli in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Susan Wallman
Steven I. Waxler
Laurie Wexler
Father Richard Wilson in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Judy & Steve Winston
Lolita Wolf
Michael C. Wolf
Lillian Zernone

\$25–\$49

Dianne Andruscavage in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Denise Boockvor
William and Carol Burke in memory of Rose Mazzarella
John Doyle
Eileen Eichler
Haileen Gray
Curtis Harwell
Fletcher Hodges
Alicia House
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David & Kathryn Mozgala
John Ort
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Madison Porrotta
Kyamran Ragimov
Happiness Unaka in memory of Rose Mazzarella
Joanne Zammit



Heartwarming and Sad

Maria Friedman on the bittersweet success of her version of *Merrily We Roll Along*.

By Logan Culwell-Block

Director and actor Maria Friedman is a beloved fixture of the West End stage, winning three Olivier Awards. Broadway has been a little late to the party. Friedman made her Main Stem debut in the 2005 Andrew Lloyd Webber musical *The Woman in White*, which ran just a few months. Nearly 20 years later, Friedman is back on the boards as a director. She helmed the Broadway megahit revival of *Merrily We Roll Along*, the Stephen Sondheim-George Furth musical. Below, Friedman discusses why she wishes Sondheim would have been alive to see this triumph.

Folks are saying you've finally cracked this cult favorite after its disastrous original production. How does it feel to see *Merrily We Roll Along* flourishing?

Maria Friedman: Steve, all those years ago when I worked with him [on one of the first U.K. productions of the musical, in which Friedman starred as Mary] and George...they'd written a new version, and they used a bunch of English actors to work their script away from the press. But they knew they'd written something beautiful. And then, of course, decades later, I got to direct my production in London... Steve saw that one and wanted it here, in his hometown. It took a while to get it here for all sorts of reasons.

But then he died. We were working together, and then he died. For him to

have seen that it's a commercial hit was something I wanted for him so badly. That I can't share it with him is a huge pain. After all that vitriol, suddenly, it's people coming from all generations and loving it. It's heartwarming and sad at the same time.

I don't think I've ever felt more relaxed on opening night. Whatever the critics said, I was proud of it.

It's a testament to the power of star casting, when it's done right. It's bringing audiences to *Merrily* that likely would never have otherwise chosen to see that show.

When I see the people coming and weeping...I mean, the Daniel Radcliffe effect is quite phenomenal. We can't underestimate what an amazing gift we had when he wanted to play Charley. He's a tremendous actor—the detail and the precision and the dedication and the brilliance is phenomenal.

How does it feel to be bringing your work, that's so known and beloved to West End audiences, to Broadway audiences?

I feel very humbled about it, because I know it's your space. Like *Merrily*, I still feel 20. I have all those feelings that I had when I was 20. Just the body's gone a bit pear-shaped. I've been given a life that I've been allowed to sing and tell stories with, and I want to do it until my last breath.



PigPen Theatre Co. are making their Broadway debut composing the songs of *Water for Elephants* on Broadway.

By Diep Tran

It's an understatement to say that the members of PigPen Theatre Company are really good friends. This seven-member collective formed 17 years ago when they were in college at Carnegie Mellon, to compose music and make plays together. And they've even lived together in New York City in a seven-bedroom apartment. To still love each other, and work well together, that's truly a miracle. "It's very, very close to a family," says band member Alex Falberg. "Whoopi Goldberg's advice for long-term relationships was: Have two bathrooms. And so, we have done that, we had seven bathrooms, so that's why I think we've stayed together for so long." The rest of the group laughs at the comment.

Aside from one member, Arya Shahi (who lives in California), these bandmates actually still live within a 15-minute walk of each other. It's convenient for work; PigPen is currently making their Broadway debut as the composers of *Water for Elephants* on Broadway. Though they're used to performing in their own shows, in this newest one, PigPen is handing over the reins to a team of actors and acrobats.

Water for Elephants—based on the best-selling novel by Sara Gruen, with a book by Rick Elice—follows a young man named Jacob whose parents die tragically in a car accident. The trauma, in the midst of the Great Depres-

sion, leads Jacob to literally running away to join the circus. Those entertainers become his chosen family.

For the score, PigPen wanted to veer away from the typical bombastic Barnum & Bailey sound. Instead, they took inspiration from the popular music of the 1930s: bluegrass, folk, and jazz.

"When we were in college, a lot of us were cast in a production of *The Grapes of Wrath*," explains Ryan Melia. "So, we kind of steeped ourselves in that Depression-era music, from college on, and we kind of got really into it. And that kind of influenced our own style of music."

As musicians who, similar to circus performers, have had to travel from town to town for their work and form a makeshift family in the process, the material spoke deeply to the PigPen crew.

"We are a group of the same people who, for 10 years, traveled all around the country," explains Shahi. "Things really start blurring between who is your family and who are your friends? Who's responsible for you? Who are you responsible for? Whose health is important to you? Whose love is important to you? I've experienced that with all six of these guys. And to be able to write a musical where we get to tell a little bit of how that feels—it really does make me kind of sentimental and emotional. . . I know that we were the right people to do it." ◆



RETELLING **SHREK**

Why Jeanine Tesori and David Lindsay-Abaire revised their first hit collaboration.

By Margaret Hall

HEATHER GERSONOWITZ

For many, the refining process is never really done. Ask any artist to reflect back on their previous work, and there are likely a few tweaks they would implement, but they simply ran out of time. Now, Tony winners Jeanine Tesori and David Lindsay-Abaire have found the time, revising their *Shrek the Musical* for a new non-union tour, currently embarking across the United States.

“We have talked a lot over the years about revisiting *Shrek*,” shares Tesori. “We just felt like there was a leaner version of it. There was a more economical version of it... there was a version that was more *us*, honestly.”

The pair have done quite a bit of growing in the 16 years since *Shrek* premiered on Broadway in 2008. Initially flung together in an “artistic arranged marriage” for the project, the pair found a vividly deep kinship. As their newest collaboration, *Kimberly Akimbo*, came to Broadway in 2022, the two found themselves looking back on *Shrek*.

It’s now one of the most-produced musicals in the country. Multiple versions of *Shrek* are currently available to license, including an hour-long variation called *Shrek Jr.* and a TYA version. As each variation was concocted, both Tesori and Lindsay-Abaire were given the opportunity to continue getting down in the dirt with the original material.

“It’s amazing what happened when there

weren’t 20 people giving us notes!” Lindsay-Abaire laughs.

This new, full-length tour, allows the pair to present “a version that’s close to what we fell in love with when we said yes to the material in the first place,” says Lindsay-Abaire. Inspired by the oral storytelling tradition of classic fairytales, the tour leans less on spectacular prosthetics and makeup design, and more on the ingenuity of the performers themselves.

“There is a framing device now, that they’re a group of people who have gathered together to present the story of *Shrek*,” describes Lindsay-Abaire. “And someone puts on a costume and suddenly, they’re one of the three little pigs. And somebody else puts on a nose, and they’re the wolf, and so on. But you can still see the human underneath.” To the playwright, this creative choice gets back at the heart of not just *Shrek*, but fairy tales themselves.

The two also cut away any excess bloat that didn’t serve the core of the story. Overall, the new tour version is slightly shorter than the original. “At this point, people know *Shrek*,” Tesori laughs. “There is a whole generation that has done it at their school, and they *really* know that original version. We were inspired to make this lighter, simpler, charming version for the next generation, so they get to be the storytellers.”



PLAYBILL HOROSCOPES: APRIL 2024

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564, so it only seems fitting that this month, we examine which of the Bard's plays aligns with your horoscope. Will your month play out like a tragedy or a comedy of errors?

By Yoanna Nikolova

Aries: *Much Ado About Nothing*

You can expect miscommunication this month. Be extra cautious about following up and clarifying any possible confusions. Your workplace could be a particularly active aspect of your life, so be ready to correct errors and take accountability for mistakes. Luckily, Venus spends most of April in your sign, ushering in new romances.

Taurus: *Hamlet*

Existential thoughts will be running through your mind demanding answers due to Mercury Retrograde in your 12th house. This may also put any plans on hold, putting you in a bit of a rut. Expect an increase in family activity this month, with visitors from out of town coming to you for insight into their dilemmas and problems.

Gemini: *The Tempest*

April is all about understanding yourself and your place in society more, Gemini. The Solar Eclipse in Aries in your 11th house of social networks and association, meaning the start of new directions related to an organization or group you're a part of. In your pursuit of self-understanding, you'll find that intimacy comforts you more than usual this month.

Cancer: *Romeo and Juliet*

Mercury Retrograde will greatly affect travel, detailed plans, and documentation for you, Cancer, so take time to double check everything you do. On the bright side, you'll find yourself excelling at work. This could mean your boss entrusts you with taking on a project or being recognized for your work with increased financial compensation.

Leo: *Coriolanus*

April will be a start-and-stop month for you, Leo. Expect to make travel plans and reconnect with people you might have recently been out of touch with. Your work will flourish, with your love life taking a back seat for a bit. This month will bring a bit of brain fog, so carefully review your timelines and tasks.

Virgo: *Twelfth Night*

With Mercury Retrograde in Aries at the start of the month, don't take on any new projects or commitments just yet, Virgo. Instead, your mind will mostly be on travel! Your main dilemma will not be if you should go, but *where* you should go. These plans will become crystal clear particularly once Mercury goes direct again.

Libra: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Mercury goes retrograde in your seventh house of partnerships, ushering in mix-ups and misunderstandings. Lucky for you, Venus, the planet of love, will spend time in your solar seventh house as well, offering a revitalization of your love life. Just make sure you're being clear about when you're meeting and what you want out of a new relationship.

Scorpio: *Macbeth*

Your daily life will be filled with shake ups. Be discreet about behavior at work as gossip can spread quickly, especially if you're trying to rise up in rank at your company. If you're in a relationship, wine and dine with your partner in crime, enjoy their company, and confide in them about anything that might be stressing you out.

Sagittarius: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Slow down this month, Sagittarius! With Mercury in Retrograde, you'll literally be forced to. Take this down time to work on any projects you've already started, but do not take on any new work. The planet of communication can cause a lot of chaos and commotion in large affairs during this time.

Capricorn: *As You Like It*

You'll be staying close to home this month, Capricorn. As you're a naturally busy zodiac sign with workaholic tendencies, you'll find your house to be the best space to avoid the craziness. Things may not go exactly as you'd like this month, but once Mercury goes direct on the 25th, it will free up your energy to take action again.

Aquarius: *The Taming of the Shrew*

When Mercury in Aries goes retrograde in your solar third house of communication, you'll be feeling the effects of it more than a lot of the other zodiac signs. With confusing dialogue and incomplete information, you'll find yourself having to clarify and follow up a lot this month. Closely examine your quality of work before submitting it to a higher up as small mistakes can add up.

Pisces: *The Merchant of Venice*

The first Mercury Retrograde of the year will put a short strain on your finances for April. Avoid making any large financial decisions this month. The Aries Solar Eclipse in your second house of income will lead to a series of new career discussions which could flourish into more money for you down the line.

Maryann Plunkett and Dorian Harewood in *The Notebook*
PHOTO BY JULIETA CERVANTES

From a Newspaper Ad to Broadway

The Notebook's Dorian Harewood on how he got his first acting job.

By Andrew Gans



Dorian Harewood is back on Broadway this season, where he's making audiences cry nightly in *The Notebook* musical. The musical adaptation of Nicholas Sparks' novel, which follows Allie and Noah through a lifetime of love, features a score by Ingrid Michaelson and a book by Bekah Brunstetter. Co-directed by Michael Greif and Schele Williams, the production casts the versatile Harewood as older Noah, caring for his wife who has Alzheimer's. Below, Harewood looks back on his career, and how Bette Davis inspired him.

There are two other actors who play Noah at different ages in *The Notebook*. How have you all worked together to create the character?

Dorian Harewood: John Cardoza, who plays Younger Noah, and Ryan Vasquez, who plays Middle Noah, are both supremely talented actors and incredible singers. It has been (and continues to be) a joy working with them on this project. We have all worked together to create Noah by simply adhering to the beautifully written script, singing the wondrous, glorious score and moving to the subtle, yet imaginatively dynamic choreography—under the brilliant direction of our co-directors.


What made you decide to become an actor?

It was not what, but who. The legendary actress, Bette Davis, talked me into acting. She is literally responsible for my entire acting career.

After landing the lead role opposite her in the musical *Miss Moffat*, Bette told me that as much as she loved my singing, which landed me the role, the thing that caught her eye was my dramatic instincts. She said they were very similar to hers, and that I should really consider dramatic acting at some point. *Miss Moffat* was scheduled to tour across the country before landing on Broadway, and I told Bette that after we hit Broadway and had our successful run, I would take her advice and look into straight acting.

As fate would have it, the show closed out of town prematurely. I took Bette's advice and auditioned for my first-ever straight acting role. It was a Broadway show called *Don't Call Back*. It starred Arlene Francis. I auditioned for the male lead, got the role, and even though the show opened and closed the same night, I won the Theatre World Award for outstanding New York City Broadway stage debut. Bette Davis accepted the award for me.

How did you get your first job in the theatre?

It was 1971. I was in Dayton, Ohio, where I was born and raised, searching the local newspaper for some auto parts for my car. I noticed an ad saying that they were holding auditions for a "bus and truck" tour of the hit musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*. I auditioned for the role of Judas. Fortunately, I landed the role. It was my first professional job in theatre. 



A Meteoric Rise

Joe Locke shot to fame in Netflix's *Heartstopper*. Now he's playing Toby in *Sweeney Todd*.

By Andrew Gans

MATTHEW MURPHY AND EMM ZIMMERMAN

A few short years ago, Joe Locke was a typical high school student in the U.K., dreaming of a showbiz life beyond his hometown of Isle of Man.

The 20-year-old actor, however, didn't think a career as a performer would be possible. "Where I'm from, not many people are able to make a career [of acting], so I feel very lucky to have been able to do it as a job now," he humbly explains.

Locke, who is currently making his Broadway debut as Tobias Ragg in the Tony-nominated revival of *Sweeney Todd* at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre (which closes May 5), has been on stage for as long as he can remember. But a career-making opportunity arrived when the charming actor bested thousands of other young hopefuls in an open call for the queer, coming-of-age Netflix series *Heartstopper*. It was an instant hit for the streamer in April 2022. The second season debuted this past August, and a third season has already been filmed.

The soft-spoken Locke says he realized the enormity of the series' success the day of its release. "I went from like 20,000 Instagram followers to 2 million," he says, adding, "It's been a very strange few years."

Much of the series' success can be attributed to the charms of Locke, who won over a legion of fans with a series of gentle

"hi"s that sparked what may be the most endearing on-screen romance in recent memory. Locke possesses a similar warmth on stage, one that he is exuding nightly in *Sweeney Todd* as the naïve Toby, a street urchin looking for motherly affection from Mrs. Lovett, who, unfortunately, is not as good-hearted as she appears.

Locke believes Toby is "very street smart. People can think he's quite unassuming, but I think he's way smarter than he looks. You can play him to be quite a simple character, but he's very complex. He has the most amazing arc of any of the characters. You meet him as this comedic foil to Pirelli, where he's choosing this horrible life with this horrible man who beats him, which means that it must be better than what he was experiencing if he's choosing to live that life. And then he finds Mrs. Lovett and sees a mother figure in her and really loves her and cares about her. And then by the end, he obviously feels betrayed and [is delivered] the final blow, as you say."

Locke is getting the chance to share the stage with two-time Tony winner Sutton Foster as Mrs. Lovett eight times a week. "Oh, it's amazing," he gushes. "She's just a legend. And I had a moment [during] her first show, where I was like, 'I'm singing "Not While I'm Around" to Sutton Foster on Broadway. This is the coolest thing ever!"

SCREEN STEALERS



THE THEATRE LOVERS' GUIDE TO FILM AND TELEVISION THIS MONTH


By Talaura Harms

This month we're leaning into a trio of thriller crime series on streaming, starring some actors from across the pond.

The Apple TV+ series *Manhunt* focuses on U.S. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's 12-day search for John Wilkes Booth and his co-conspirators following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. *The Crown* Emmy winner Tobias Menzies, who recently appeared Off-Broadway in *The Hunt*, stars as Stanton opposite Olivier winner and Tony nominee Anthony Boyle, who originated the role of Scorpius Malfoy in *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, as Booth. Shakespeare in the Park regular Hamish Linklater appears as Lincoln. The series was created by Monica Beletsky, based on the book *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer* by James L. Swanson. The show is releasing weekly episodes through April 19.

Olivier winner Andrew Scott will take on the title role in the new Netflix series adaptation of Patricia Highsmith's 1955 *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. In the eight-episode limited series,

simply titled *Ripley*, Scott plays the titular grifter who falls in with his mark, Dickie Greenleaf, and Dickie's girlfriend, Marge Sherwood—sparking a new life of obsession, fraud, and murder. Olivier nominee Johnny Flynn (*Jerusalem*, *Hangmen*) stars as Dickie and Dakota Fanning as Marge. All eight episodes, written and directed by Steven Zaillian (Oscar-winning scribe of *Schindler's List*), are available for bingeing beginning April 4.

Apple TV+ also has *Sugar*, a new modern noir twist on the private detective story. Complete with smoky voice-over narration by its lead private eye, the series stars Oscar nominee Colin Farrell as John Sugar, who is hired to solve the disappearance of the granddaughter of a wealthy Hollywood producer. Two-time Tony nominee and current star of *Doubt*, Amy Ryan, co-stars as Melanie Mackintosh, who Sugar enlists to help him on his search through the streets of Los Angeles as they uncover the long-held family secrets of his clients. The series also features Kirby, James Cromwell, Anna Gunn, Dennis Boutsikaris, and Nate Corddry. *Sugar* premieres April 5. 

[PLAYBILL.COM/VAULT](https://www.playbill.com/vault)