



**SOUVENIR PROGRAM**  
**SAMUEL J. FRIEDMAN THEATRE**



# The Frogs

Good evening, ladies gentleman and welcome.

Patrons are respectfully reminded that the use of cameras or sound or video recording equipment is strictly forbidden. Also please do not sit in the aisles, as in the event of any emergency you will be trampled to death. Also, patrons who are fitted with hearing-aids are requested not to turn up their levels too high, lest they set up feed back in patrons fitted with pacemakers.

Please do not crinkle your program incessantly.

Please do not fidget uncontrollably in your seats.

Please do not make little clicking noises with your tongue

And please

Don't cough

It tends to throw the actors off.

If something's crude, please

Don't come unglued, please.

No need to leave in haste -

The author has a reputation based

On taste

So please

Don't fart -

There's very little air and this is art.

If now and then you're restless,

Don't lose heart,

A premature departure may seem smart,

But wait for the finale (which is brilliant),

Then depart.

S.S.





MANHATTAN THEATRE CLUB  
The Samuel J. Friedman Theatre

Artistic Director  
**LYNNE MEADOW**

Executive Director  
**CHRIS JENNINGS**

in association with **CMI** and **DARYL ROTH**

present

**LEA SALONGA**

in  
**CAMERON MACKINTOSH'S**  
production of

# Sondheim's **OLD FRIENDS**

Music and Lyrics by  
**STEPHEN SONDHEIM**

Devised by  
**CAMERON MACKINTOSH**

Co-starring

**JACOB DICKEY KEVIN EARLEY JASMINE FORSBERG  
KATE JENNINGS GRANT BONNIE LANGFORD BETH LEAVEL  
GAVIN LEE JASON PENNYCOOKE JOANNA RIDING  
JEREMY SECOMB KYLE SELIG MARIA WIRRIES DANIEL YEARWOOD  
PAIGE FAURE ALEXA LOPEZ GREG MILLS PETER NEUREUTHER**

Scenic Design  
**MATT KINLEY**

Costume Design  
**JILL PARKER**

Lighting Design  
**WARREN LETTON**

Sound Design  
**MICK POTTER**

Projection Design  
**GEORGE REEVE**

Original Orchestrations  
**JONATHAN TUNICK\***

Musical Arrangements  
**STEPHEN METCALFE**

Music Supervision  
**ALFONSO CASADO TRIGO**

Music Director  
**ANNBRIIT DUCHATEAU**

Music Coordinator  
**MICHAEL AARONS**

Wig, Hair, and Make-up Design  
**STEFAN MUSCH**

Associate Choreographer  
**JO MORRIS**

Associate Director  
**NIKKI WOOLLASTON**

Casting  
**TARA RUBIN, CSA  
XAVIER RUBIANO, CSA  
PETER VAN DAM, CSA**

Production Management  
**what if we PRODUCTIONS  
LUKE RICCA**

Production Stage Manager  
**DAVID LOBER**

Choreography by  
**STEPHEN MEAR**

Artistic Consultant  
**JULIA MCKENZIE**

Direction and Musical Staging by  
**MATTHEW BOURNE**

Originally produced in London by Cameron Mackintosh.  
North American premiere presented by Center Theatre Group at the Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles.

\*See musical credits page for additional orchestration credits





# STEPHEN SONDHEIM

BY DAVID BENEDICT

The death of every major artist is, quite rightly, immediately followed by a celebration and re-evaluation of their work – often so much so that the biggest regret is that they aren’t around to appreciate it. Among the many remarkable things about the life and extraordinary career of Stephen Sondheim is that he didn’t have to wait until then.

After years of being, at best, critically ignored until the 1970s when his work took off, over the last two decades of his long life he was – often to his embarrassment – fully aware of the esteem in which he and his work were rightly held. In 2015 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, he and James Lapine led a talk reuniting the original company of their 1987 show *Into the Woods*. This was long before the film version and its \$213m box office success but instant demand for tickets was so high that they immediately had to put on an extra performance.

The moment they walked on stage the entire theatre erupted: the roar of approval was so exuberant you’d think the local team had just won the world’s biggest sporting prize. This wasn’t the expected niche group of die-hard traditional theatregoers: these were people of every age and ethnicity down to kids far too young to have seen the original but who had performed it in schools and colleges across America.

And children, as his song says, will listen. What’s remarkable is that the Sondheim songs they listen to, know and love derive from an astonishingly eclectic catalogue of dramatically and musically demanding musicals, none of which could be categorised as easy listening for large but lazy audiences.

One of his career highlights that he affectionately looked back on was visiting the then very infirm Cole Porter towards the end of the latter’s life. He played him songs from *Gypsy* for which he wrote lyrics to Jule Styne’s music. Sondheim nearly glowed with happiness when he got a laugh of approval from Porter over his unexpected quadruple rhyme in *Together Wherever We Go*.

It was Porter who, for his 1933 musical *Nymph Errant*, wrote the song *Experiment*. Sondheim didn’t see the show – he was living on New York’s Central Park West and was three years old at the time – but his understanding of and love for musical theatre meant he would certainly have known the song’s lyric: “Experiment: make it your motto night and day.” Put that together with his own drolly comic Madam’s song *I Never Do Anything Twice* that he wrote for the 1976 Sherlock Holmes film *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* and you have the closest to a succinct summation of his unique ethos.

Many, if not most, artists hit on a winning formula and then, to the delight of their audiences and accountants alike, work variations upon it.

That’s why movie sequels and franchises are so popular: it’s easier to sell known quantities. But from the word go, Sondheim catapulted himself into the tiniest handful of game-changing 20th century artists – I’m thinking Picasso and Caryl Churchill – in his absolute refusal to repeat himself.

In a form routinely seen as reactionary, he was a radical: he forever believed in safety last. And it’s that which will be his legacy. Every artist who believes in forever pursuing new ideas is in his debt.

What excited Sondheim and makes him so influential was his fascination with finding individual and perfect forms in which to express each show’s ideas. From a lush celebration and warning of the delights and perils of nostalgia in *Follies* to the horror-movie-influenced score for his musical serial-killer-thriller *Sweeney Todd* and his musically pointillist depiction of a Seurat painting and the art of making art, *Sunday in the Park With George*, no two shows are alike.

Until Sondheim came along, no-one made musicals out of subjects like that. And while the best writers have no wish to sound like him – a true artist develops their own voice – his constant reinvention of musical theatre and his delight in the art of the possible and the possibilities of art will forever act as inspiration.

His private life, overflowing with vital, longstanding friendships and, latterly, happiness with his husband Jeff, balanced his life-long dedication to musical theatre. That much was blindingly clear not only in his shows and two startlingly eloquent autobiographical volumes of his annotated lyrics *Finishing the Hat* and *Look, I Made A Hat*, but in the countless hours he spent meeting and encouraging young writers and chairing organisations supporting the careers of dramatists. That he left the bulk of his estate to a foundation benefiting upcoming musical theatre composers, lyricists and book writers is entirely unsurprising to those who knew him. Maybe the climax of his *Move On* from *Sunday in the Park With George* could serve as its motto:

**“Anything you do  
Let it come from you  
Then it will be new  
Give us more to see.”**

© 2022 David Benedict. David Benedict is currently writing Sondheim’s official biography to be published by Random House (USA) and Picador (UK).





# GETTING OLD FRIENDS TOGETHER

Our Broadway-bound Baby, *Old Friends*, was conceived during Covid as two old friends chatted and gossiped together - Steve locked up in his country house in Connecticut and me down on my farm in deepest Somerset, both wondering what on earth we were going to do to get the theatre and our shows back up.

Steve suggested that it was time to put together a third revue of his work, to follow the worldwide hit (my first!) of *Side by Side by Sondheim* (the show that brought us and Julia McKenzie together in London in 1976). It was followed by *Putting It Together* in 1992 which had premiered in England with Diana Rigg and then played New York, first with Julie Andrews at the Manhattan Theatre Club then Carol Burnett at the Barrymore Theatre on Broadway.

In the midst of our isolation, we started to work. From the off, we wanted to do something different from either *Putting It Together*, which had a slender plot and has not been seen that often, or *Side by Side* which had the device of a Narrator. The material was solely drawn from Steve's words from start to

finish (with a little help from James Lapine). So, we started writing our lists - some songs he had on his list, some different ones on mine, but many of them were the same.

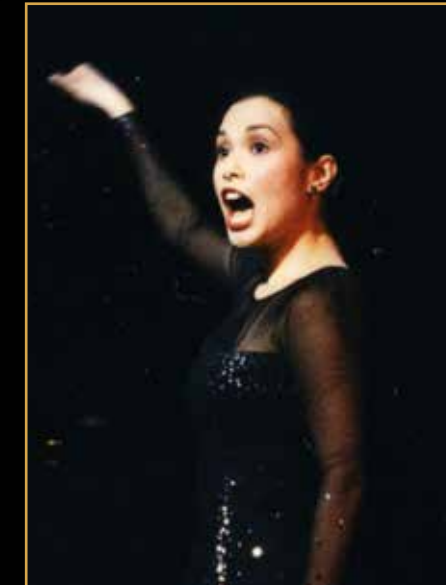
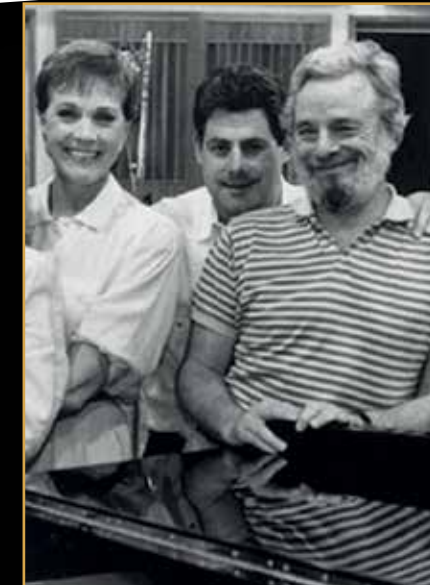
Then, all of a sudden, lockdown came to an end and we had to return to our day jobs and get our shows on. Steve had his musical, *Company*, on Broadway amongst many other projects, and I had all of my numerous productions around the world, battling to bring back audiences to the live theatre.

I visited Steve in October 2021 when we touched on the show again but didn't dwell on it much beyond Steve saying, "we really must get this done". Very sadly, four weeks later on Thanksgiving, just a few days after we chatted on the phone and made each other laugh one last time, Steve moved on. His old friends and the world grieved.

So, over the Christmas break, I decided to 'Finish the Hat' and collate our notes and complete 'our farewell show'. In three days, I had a running order of all the material I wanted to include - miraculously this list went through very little changes during the

rehearsal period - it was as if Steve was sitting on my shoulder guiding me. I took my first draft to my longtime collaborator, Matthew Bourne, to enlist him to stage it and in turn, both of us wanted Stephen Mear to choreograph. Knowing that we were going to assemble a tremendous array of star talent for the forthcoming Gala, celebrating Steve's life which we were staging in May 2022, as a fundraiser for Steve's new Foundation - in the theatre I had rebuilt and renamed after him, The Sondheim - both Matt and I felt it would be a great asset to have Maria Freidman help us with the staging during our very short two week rehearsal period (with people coming and going because of their other commitments). This was not an easy ask of Maria as she was already heavily involved in several of her own Sondheim projects at the time and was actually performing nightly in her own one woman show.

Because of Steve, I was able to assemble an extraordinary cast including Judi Dench, Imelda Staunton, Julia McKenzie (performing for the first time in 20 years), Michael Ball,



Damian Lewis, Janie Dee, Bonnie Langford and many more. But the first person I rang was Bernadette Peters, whom I've known a long time and had worked with several times, including *Hey, Mr Producer!*. Bernadette had even presented me with the coveted Sondheim Award at Steve's personal request. She of course was also Steve's special muse having been involved in the original productions of several of his greatest works. As I discussed the material with Bernadette - I didn't have "I Know Things Now" on my original list - Bernadette came up with the suggestion of doing that song as an older woman. She even tested it out during one of her concert tours in North America, just to make sure it worked, and of course it did brilliantly. What was unusual about the show is that so much of the way it came together was so effortless, because many of us had already worked on the material with Steve; we knew we had his blessing because he had helped shape it all in the first place.

When choosing the songs to include I particularly wanted to show off how Steve's

greatest music was as brilliant as his greatest lyrics. Steve wrote some of the most brilliant songs ever for the musical stage but as he was so prolific and profound as a writer, it is impossible to put together a definitive list of his greatest songs as everyone has their own favourites. So, our choice of songs purely reflected the joy and love I have for my old friend, one of the greatest Broadway babies of all time.

Our Gala proved a sensational success, convincing me to press ahead and give *Old Friends* the full stage life Steve and I had always planned and it opened in a fully realised production at the Gielgud Theatre in 2023.

Matthew, side-by-side with the incomparable Julia McKenzie, Stephen Mear and I re-fashioned the show to feature an all-star ensemble of 19. Bernadette, astonishingly making her West End stage debut in the show, was joined by Lea Salonga, who had become my youngest old friend in 1989 when she became a star in her sensational London debut at the age of 17, starring in the original *Miss Saigon*. They led an incredible West End

company performing 39 of the greatest songs ever written for a musical.

I am thrilled that Bernadette and Lea are now bringing this show to Los Angeles and Broadway, alongside several of our rapturously received London old friends, including Bonnie Langford, Joanna Riding, Jeremy Secomb, Gavin Lee, and Jason Pennycooke. To round out the company, we have gathered a number of brilliant new American friends - including Beth Leavel, Kate Jennings Grant, Jacob Dickey, Kevin Earley, Jasmine Forsberg, Kyle Selig, Maria Wirries, and Daniel Yearwood, with Paige Faure, Alexa Lopez, Greg Mills, and Peter Neureuther. It is rare to get this calibre of West End and Broadway talent all together in one production. Only the sublime Stephen Sondheim could make it happen. We hope you will have an unforgettable evening, celebrating the master of musical theatre in "a great big Broadway show" - just as Steve wanted.

BY CAMERON MACKINTOSH

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF ROMLEY, MICHAELLE POFER TRENCH AND JOAN MARCUS



STEPHEN SONDHEIM'S INITIALS APPEAR AS A DECORATIVE CREST IN THE PLASTERWORK AT THE NEWLY RESTORED SONDHEIM THEATRE IN LONDON'S WEST END, RENAMED IN HIS HONOUR IN 2019.







Beth Leavel and Gavin Lee



Jason Pennycooke and Daniel Yearwood



Kyle Selig



Lea Salonga and Bernadette Peters



Jason Pennycooke and Daniel Yearwood



Lea Salonga



Peter Neureuther and Jasmine Forsberg



Lea Salonga and Bernadette Peters



Joanna Riding



Jeremy Secomb, Kate Jennings Grant, Gavin Lee, Beth Leavel, Jason Pennycooke, Jasmine Forsberg, Jacob Dickey, Peter Neureuther, Paige Faure and Kyle Selig



Matthew Bourne



Julia McKenzie and Cameron Mackintosh



Bonnie Langford, Beth Leavel, and Jeremy Secomb



Kate Jennings Grant



Jacob Dickey and Bernadette Peters



Daniel Yearwood, Kate Jennings Grant, Peter Neureuther, Maria Wierries, and Bonnie Langford



# Sondheim and Me



"I will try and write a few words about my relationship with Steve but the truth is I'm not a writer...he is. He wrote those amazing thoughts and words and I'm the interpreter...but I'll try.  
He gives me thoughts and feelings to fly with.  
To express my deepest fears and my highest joys.  
He writes of all the human emotions...but he goes deep...so that we are surprised while we are taking the trip and even more so when we arrive at the destination.  
Tonight all of us on stage will be taking that trip  
Joyful...scary...fun..."

I wonder where we will land!  
But I know all of us on stage and in the audience will be full of love for the man!!!"

**Bernadette Peters**



"My most treasured memory of Steve was him sitting in Harrington's Pie Shop in Tooting, watching our production of *Sweeney Todd*, splattered with blood, laughing heartily (at his own jokes in the score) and afterwards exclaiming that he 'Bloody Loved It!'. A few years later, when the show transferred to that he 'Bloody Loved It!'. A few years later, when the show transferred to New York, I found myself sitting on the stairs in his brownstone in Manhattan having conversations about his home, his gorgeous poodles and, of course, the production. He was warm, self-deprecating and generous with his time. His notes about character/music/lyrics will be treasured forever."

**Jeremy Secomb**

"I first met 'Mr Sondheim' when I played Baby June in the London production of *Gypsy*. It was 1973, I was eight years old and my Mama Rose was (Dame) Angela Lansbury. I had no idea at the time how significant that show would be for me, working with the original creative team writer - director Arthur Laurents, composer Jule Styne and lyricist Stephen Sondheim. Although my character was very confident, in reality this little British girl was too shy to speak to any of them. I was, however, very perceptive and soaked up their magnificent creative talents like a sponge. The show transferred from London to a national tour of the United States before a sellout season on Broadway. Happily, I went too. And, thanks to the team including 'Mr Sondheim', I had the privilege of making my Broadway debut at the age of 10...they truly did 'Let Me Entertain You!'"

**Bonnie Langford**



Bonnie Langford as  
Baby June in *Gypsy*

"Stephen Sondheim's genius and musical intricacies are akin to the encrypted security we see in covert government agencies of today, and although you need to be a code breaker to decipher how he did it in the first place, the message reads loud and clear to the listener.

From Paintings, Pies, Clowns or *Giants in the Sky* his music sweeps you away into a world of make believe, that you (whilst there) are made to believe is real. As you feel the emotion of the composition, the tonics or the deliberate discords, it's paradoxical. Which in turn forces the synapses in the brain to hear what he heard, when he first heard it, in his mind, before pen was even touched to paper.

It is an honor to be asked to be a part of celebrating his legacy, and although I have always heard Sondheim near and far, and experienced the effects as described above, this will be my first outing performing his work, but I can guarantee, it will not be the last!"

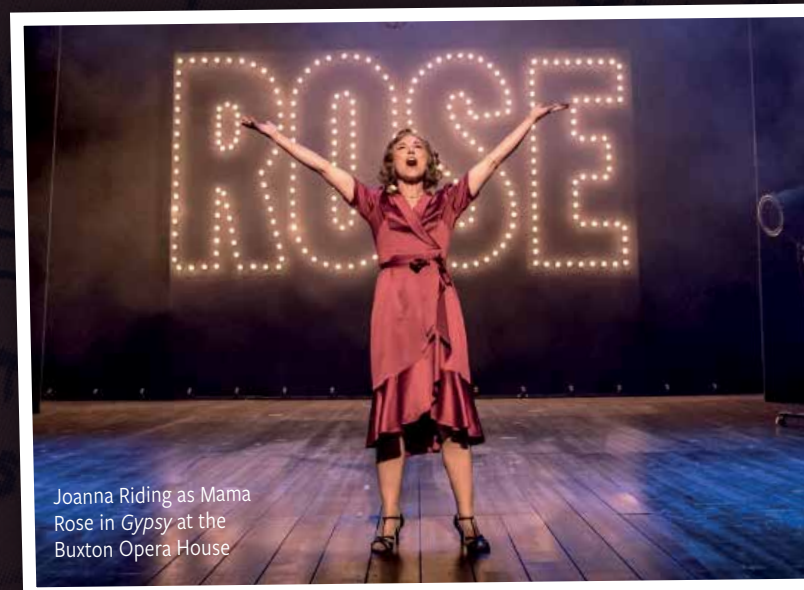
**Jason Pennycooke**



Jett Pangan and Lea Salonga in *Sweeney Todd*

"Steve's work at the onset can be frighteningly difficult to get, to the point that it can get frustrating and sometimes overwhelming, but one friend that did get to work with him had this to say: 'once you get it, you'll always have it.' He was right. For Steve's 90th birthday, I was asked to sing *Loving You* from *Passion*. It's something that I had previously sung in shows, so this wasn't going to be difficult. Because it was at the beginning of the Covid pandemic, everyone that participated had to film themselves from home, and that's what I did. Living room, phone propped up on my piano, a few passes at the music, and that was that. After the special was shown on YouTube, Steve, ever gracious and kind, took the time to send an email to me to say, 'Thank you for the birthday present. You made the song truly moving.' My jaw hit the floor at this gesture. That's one email I'm never ever deleting."

**Lea Salonga**



Joanna Riding as Mama  
Rose in *Gypsy* at the  
Buxton Opera House

"A *Little Night Music*, 1995 at The National - working with Stephen I mentioned that as the young and rather vacuous Anne, I felt that the audience disliked me. In his fruity, frank way, he replied, 'Why would you give a !#\*@ if the audience likes you or not, just tell the story!'"

It was a valuable, if sharp lesson. Shake off your vanity, be true to the character and trust in the writing. Especially writing as good as his."

**Joanna Riding**

"As a teen going into the theatre world I had every Sondheim musical on CD and played them constantly. I wore out my VHS copies of the Broadway productions of *Into the Woods* and *Sunday in the Park with George*. I never thought I would ever get to meet the man but...the one and only Sondheim show I've been lucky enough to be part of was the world premiere of *Sondheim's Saturday Night* at the Bridewell Theatre. Little did we know Stephen would show up during tech week and work with us on the show. I've never been so nervous performing my number in front of the man himself. How lucky was I to have this genius give me notes and feedback on one of HIS songs!?! Wow."

**Gavin Lee**



"When I was an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, I remember the excitement we all felt the day Stephen Sondheim came to campus to speak to us. I was one of the lucky ones who got to ask him a question that afternoon. Not only did he answer it with wit, precision, and candor, but like all great teachers, he made me feel like an equal and a colleague. He spoke of the challenge of writing one particular lyric in *West Side Story*, and the relief and pride he felt when he 'solved the puzzle'. To hear this genius speak so freely (and humbly) about feeling stumped and then breaking through the block was a great reminder that creating art is almost never without some struggle, a lesson I carried forward into this business. What an honor to be singing his music on Broadway all these years later!"

**Kate Jennings Grant**



# Sondheim and Me



Kevin Earley, Kyle Selig, Kate Jennings Grant and Daniel Yearwood

"Many may not know Stephen Sondheim was a huge supporter of regional theater. When I was invited to sing at a living room fundraiser for Reprise! Theater in LA, I had no idea the honoree would be Mr. Sondheim himself. Needless to say, I was nervous to perform a Sondheim song in front of the legend himself. What I would later realize is how supportive he was in 'listening without judgment' as he described it. Generous with his time and his talent, I feel lucky to have met him!"

**Kevin Earley**

"I, like many, was first introduced to Sondheim through *Into the Woods*, only to learn how varied and exciting and deep his repertoire is over time and to grow up with his work always feeling relatable. I've reconnected in new ways to his music over every decade of my life, and it has been nothing short of life-affirming. The stories, the themes, are as universal as Ancient Greek or Shakespeare or Sanskrit yogic texts. He will live in our hearts forever as one of the purveyors of truth for the human spirit, of any age."

**Paige Faure**

"I didn't really get into musicals until late in high school, so I played catch up, wearing out every CD I could get my hands on. Everything changed when I found *Sweeney Todd*. I didn't know shows could be so dark and funny AND moving. That's when I started to learn all of Sondheim's shows. I feel incredibly fortunate to have performed in several of them now, and *Old Friends* is the ultimate super fan dream come true."

**Greg Mills**

"Although I never had the opportunity to work with Sondheim in person, his music has changed my life. And continues to. Thank you."

**Beth Leavel**

"While I sadly never met Sondheim, I am so lucky and blessed to perform so much of his work in my Broadway debut. Whenever I brought his music into class in college I was definitely nervous to get all of the complex rhythms right, and simply remember the words, but that fear didn't compare to the expression on the pianist's face when I placed the sheet music on their stand! I am so grateful for all the lessons that Sondheim's music has taught me and continues to teach me every time we perform. Here's to "Growing Up", slowly but surely!"

**Peter Neureuther**



Peter Neureuther, Kyle Selig, Gavin Lee, Jasmine Forsberg, Daniel Yearwood and Paige Faure

"The first musical I was ever cast in was *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in high school, and I had no idea how profoundly a wonderfully silly show could shape my life. It introduced me to some of my closest, lifelong friendships and gave me my first real taste of theater as a community - something I've held onto ever since. Years later, I had the surreal honor of meeting Sondheim while performing in a one-night-only concert version of *Saturday Night*, his very first musical. In our conversation, he was generous, kind, and wildly unassuming, sharing that watching the show felt like 'going through his baby pictures.' Thank you, Steve, for your life's work and the way it continues to bring us together."

**Kyle Selig**



Paige Faure, Alexa Lopez, Kyle Selig and Daniel Yearwood

"My first encounter with Sondheim's work was as a young girl, when I saw a local production of *West Side Story*. Still, there are no words to describe the transformative experience I had that night. I not only saw myself represented onstage, but the music seemed to move and awaken my soul in a new, unprecedented way. From that point forward, Sondheim has influenced and inspired both my life and my theatrical journey. There isn't a human emotion, no matter how raw or rare, that hasn't been explored by him. On top of that, every one of those explorations is perfectly set to intoxicating melodies and masterfully clever lyrics. I think that's why Sondheim has and will always remain timeless - no matter where you are or how you may be feeling on a given day, his work has the ability to guide you back to a grounded, utterly human place, where you can laugh until your belly hurts, cry until your eyes grow tired, and truly question what it means to 'be alive.' It is an absolute honor to perform his work - moreover, with this incredible company of absolute stars. When I think of that young girl watching *West Side Story*, I can't help but wonder how she would feel, full of awe and pride, if she could see into the future and know that she would play a role in preserving the rich legacy of Sondheim."

**Alexa Lopez**



Maria Wirries

"The first musical I ever saw in person was a production of *Company*. I was ten years old and admittedly missed most of the plot but I was transfixed by the music and swept up in the emotions. And of course, being named Maria, I fell in love with *West Side Story* every time someone sang out that famous tritone! I began learning Sondheim's vast and beautifully complex repertoire in my voice lessons as a child and then had the opportunity to play the Witch in *Into the Woods* in middle school! I actually insisted on playing the Witch because I was/am so inspired by Bernadette Peters! It has been beyond a dream come true to share the stage with her now and hear her incredible stories about working on this legendary material."

**Maria Wirries**



Kate Jennings Grant, Bonnie Langford and Jasmine Forsberg

"While *Old Friends* is my first opportunity to perform Sondheim's work on a professional stage, his musicals have long been woven into my creative DNA and have shaped the artist I am today."

My senior year of high school, I sang *Everybody Says Don't* from *Anyone Can Whistle* at the Florida State Thespian Festival. Sondheim's brilliant lyrics encapsulate the feeling of being put in a box, labeled, and limited - and choosing to defy the expectations set by others and forge your own path. The song could not have been a better anthem for this chapter of my life. I was auditioning for college musical theatre programs at the time, vying for a chance to study my passion for the next four years at a distinguished university. When I sang Sondheim's powerful song, I was demanding that the world see me and accept me just as I am: limitless.

Thank you, Stephen, for encouraging me to be brave.  
'I say don't - don't be afraid.'"

**Jasmine Forsberg**

"Our first preview of *Company* in December 2021, Stephen came and sat on the aisle, house left, four rows back. He was the first one standing at curtain call and he was the last to leave, holding court with the cast for an hour afterwards at the back of the house in the soft lights of the Jacobs Theatre. This was a week before he passed and I will always hold the memory of that evening in my heart. A gift to perform his work then, now, and always."

**Jacob Dickey**



"*Merrily We Roll Along* was my introduction to Stephen Sondheim. The score's expressions of love, hope, joy and grief moved me to listen to every show he'd ever written; and I was captivated by Sondheim's depiction of *Being Alive* - even from a metaphorical grave. Performing with the 2023 revival cast of *Sweeney Todd* allowed me to experience, first hand, the rollercoaster of life so brilliantly encapsulated by Sondheim's work. He truly is an eclectic and brilliant artist whose work demonstrates that there is room for empathy, that growth is a choice, and that there is a *Somewhere* for all of us. To the *Giant in the Sky* - Thank You!"

**Daniel Yearwood**



# SONDHEIM AND ME

## Cameron once asked me about the first time I ever met Stephen.

Well, the fact is I very nearly didn't. I THINK he was in the darkened auditorium when I auditioned for the British replacement cast of *Company* in 1972. I couldn't see him – just heard a few mutters. Anyway, I got the job, and was delighted to be given the part of April the airline stewardess, to start in three months' time. But April had to return to the States after three weeks, so I was somersaulted into the original American cast. Talk about luck! But of course, I'd missed their opening night... And of course, The Man.

Jump-cut to when David Kernan, Ned Sherrin and Millicent Martin had put together a little revue of Steve's songs and invited me to make up the quartet. I was desperate to sing those songs. There was a pile of music on the piano, and we were asked to pick what we wanted, and I WANTED *Broadway Baby* and *Losing My Mind*. We were to do four out-of-town evenings, starting at The Gardener Arts Centre near Brighton. We then went to Johnny Dankworth and Cleo Laine's little theatre at Wavendon, hoping to invite a few managements along including Cameron Mackintosh (a young, thrusting, upcoming producer) to see if they might be interested in taking it further. Cameron didn't get to see it because he went down the M4 instead of the M1 and missed the show! He sent his friend Christopher Biggins instead who advised him to take it on. Well, he did.

"Only four performers and two pianos – it's got to be cheap!" He booked us into the Mermaid Theatre for six weeks. Joy! But still no sign of The Man.... Jump-cut now to a private run-through, just before the opening night. I'd just started *Broadway Baby* when there was a rush down the auditorium stairs – it was Steve yelling "No, no, that's the wrong tempo – bright Vaudeville style!" – demonstrating with jazz hands. So that was our first meeting. Here I was, standing next to The Man, and shakily telling him about how I wasn't that old (Ethel Shutta, the original woman was 80). But I wanted to do it as a young hopeful, bursting with ambition... I was pretty wobbly by now, until Ned stepped in and said, "Look, Steve why don't you come to the show tonight and judge for yourself. It goes very well". So He did – and It did. And He said, "Well what the hell do I know – I only wrote it".

So that was the beginning of a nearly 50-year friendship. Wonderful years, encompassing *Side by Side by Sondheim* from Wyndham's Theatre to the *Music Box* on Broadway; *Sweeney Todd* at the National; *Into the Woods*, *Company*, *Follies*, *Anyone Can Whistle* and directing *Putting It Together* in New York and *A Little Night Music* in Japan – but that's another story.

So... jump-cut to today, and the reasons we are all here together. To celebrate, to remember and to say thanks. Thanks, from every Sondheim singer in the world. Thanks, from every audience member who has thrilled to his words and music.

Thank you, Steve, The sun comes up... The coffee cup.

BY JULIA MCKENZIE



PHOTOGRAPH © JULIA MCKENZIE



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL LE POER TRENCH



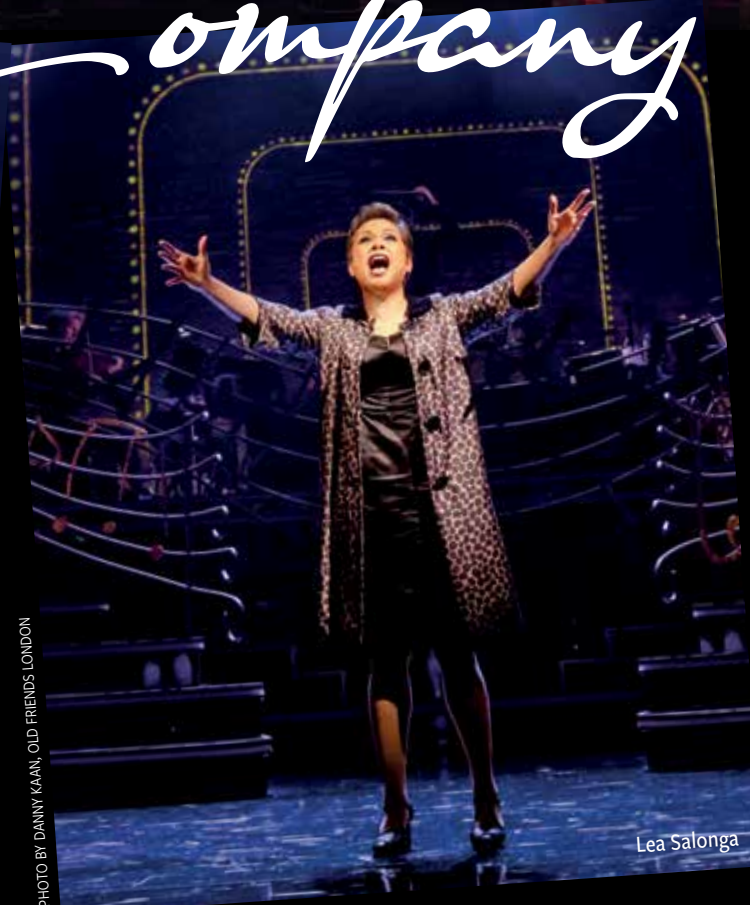
PHOTO BY MATTHEW MURPHY

PHOTO BY DANNY KAAH, OLD FRIENDS LONDON



Bernadette Peters

PHOTO BY DANNY KAAH, OLD FRIENDS LONDON



Lea Salonga





Bernadette Peters and Lea Salonga



Bonnie Langford



Kyle Selig, Daniel Yearwood, and Jacob Dickey



Jason Pennycooke



Jeremy Secomb and Lea Salonga



Gavin Lee and Kate Jennings Grant



Gavin Lee, Kyle Selig, and Jason Pennycooke



Kate Jennings Grant, Bonnie Langford, and Joanna Riding



Jacob Dickey, Kate Jennings Grant, Bernadette Peters, and Company



Lea Salonga



Bernadette Peters



Jacob Dickey and Bernadette Peters



# THE COMPANY OF OLD FRIENDS

Bernadette Peters  
Lea Salonga

Jacob Dickey  
Kevin Earley  
Jasmine Forsberg  
Bonnie Langford  
Kate Jennings Grant  
Beth Leavel  
Gavin Lee  
Jason Pennycooke  
Joanna Riding  
Jeremy Secomb  
Kyle Selig  
Maria Wirries  
Daniel Yearwood  
Paige Faure  
Alexa Lopez  
Greg Mills  
Peter Neureuther

## MUSICAL CREDITS

**SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH GEORGE**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Book by James Lapine  
Orchestrations by Michael Starobin

**COMPANY**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Sid Ramin & Irwin Kostal

**DICK TRACY**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**PASSION**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**INTO THE WOODS**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Book by James Lapine  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**BOUNCE**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Book by Hugh Wheeler  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**SWEENEY TODD**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Book by Hugh Wheeler  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**WEST SIDE STORY**  
Music by Leonard Bernstein  
Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Sid Ramin & Irwin Kostal

**FOLLIES**  
Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick

**GYPSY**  
Music by Jule Styne  
Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim  
Orchestrations by Sid Ramin & Robert Ginzler

**THE MAD SHOW**  
Music by Mary Rogers  
Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim



# MUSICAL NUMBERS

## ACT I

Prologue..... Words by James Lapine  
“Side By Side” ..... Bernadette, Lea  
“Comedy Tonight” ..... Bernadette, Lea, Jason, Gavin, Company  
“Company” ..... Company  
“The Little Things You Do Together” ..... Beth, Gavin  
“You Could Drive A Person Crazy” ..... Bonnie, Kate, Joanna  
“Live Alone And Like It” ..... Jason  
“Loving You” ..... Lea  
“Getting Married Today” ..... Joanna, Kevin, Maria, Company  
“Into The Woods” ..... Lea, Jasmine, Jacob, Kevin, Kyle, Alexa, Company  
“On The Steps Of The Palace” ..... Jasmine  
“Agony” ..... Kyle, Kevin, Maria  
“I Know Things Now”/ “Bounce” ..... Bernadette  
“Hello, Little Girl” ..... Jacob, Bernadette  
“Children Will Listen” ..... Lea, Bernadette  
“A Weekend In The Country” ..... Kate, Gavin, Bonnie, Kevin, Maria, Company  
“Send In The Clowns” ..... Bernadette  
“The Ballad Of Sweeney Todd” ..... Jeremy, Company  
“The Worst Pies In London” ..... Lea  
“My Friends” ..... Jeremy  
“Pretty Women” ..... Jeremy, Jacob  
“A Little Priest” ..... Jeremy, Lea  
“The Ladies Who Lunch” ..... Beth  
“Sunday” \* ..... Bernadette, Jacob, Company

\* Excerpt from James Lapine’s book for *Sunday in the Park with George*.

## INTERMISSION

## ACT II

Entr’acte – Overture from *Merrily We Roll Along* ..... The Sondheim Orchestra  
“Somewhere” ..... Lea  
“Tonight Quintet” ..... Jacob, Daniel, Kyle, Maria, Jasmine, Company  
“Broadway Baby” ..... Bernadette, Jason, Company  
“Everybody Ought To Have A Maid” ..... Gavin, Jason, Kyle  
“You Gotta Get A Gimmick” ..... Bernadette, Beth, Joanna  
“Waiting For The Girls Upstairs” ..... Kyle, Daniel, Jacob, Jasmine, Maria  
“I’m Still Here” \* ..... Bonnie  
“Could I Leave You?” ..... Gavin  
“Buddy’s Blues” ..... Jason  
“The Boy From...” ..... Kate, Daniel  
“Losing My Mind” ..... Bernadette  
“Everything’s Coming Up Roses” ..... Lea  
“Not A Day Goes By” ..... Bernadette, Joanna, Bonnie, Kate, Lea, Beth, Company  
“Being Alive” ..... Jacob, Company  
“Old Friends” ..... Bernadette, Lea, Company  
“Side By Side” (Finale) ..... Bernadette, Lea, Company  
“Love Is In The Air” \*\* ..... Written and Performed by Stephen Sondheim

\* Includes some of the lyrics especially written by Stephen Sondheim for Shirley MacLaine in the film *Postcards from the Edge*  
\*\* “Love is in the Air” was originally written as the opening number for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* but ultimately was cut from the show.





Lea Salonga and Jacob Dickey



Jason Pennycooke



Kate Jennings Grant



Bonnie Langford and Maria Wirries



Lea Salonga and Jeremy Secomb



Gavin Lee



Gavin Lee, Bonnie Langford, Daniel Yearwood, and Kyle Selig



Joanna Riding and Company



Beth Leavel, Bernadette Peters, and Joanna Riding





Bernadette Peters



Kevin Earley and Kyle Selig



Jasmine Forsberg and Maria Wirries



Maria Wirries and Jacob Dickey



Beth Leavel



Kyle Selig



Jasmine Forsberg



Beth Leavel and Gavin Lee



Lea Salonga





Beth Leavel, Bernadette Peters, and Joanna Riding



Beth Leavel



Jacob Dickey, Kyle Selig, Daniel Yearwood, Jasmine Forsberg, and Maria Wirries



Jeremy Secomb and Company

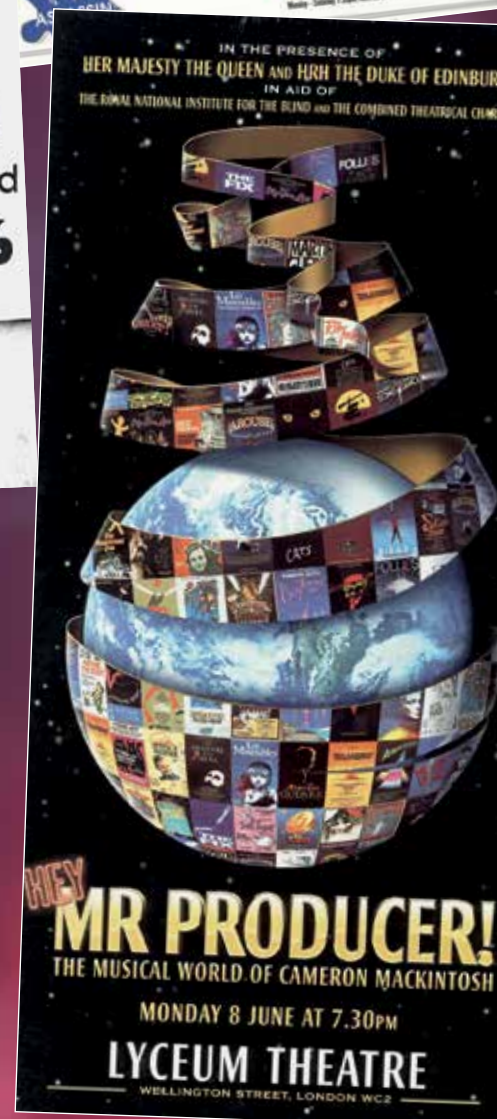


Cameron Mackintosh and Stephen Sondheim's collaboration started with the revue *Side By Side By Sondheim*, which was put together by Julia McKenzie and friends and in which she also starred, in London in 1976 and was subsequently performed around the world. A few years later, after the success of Cameron's productions of *Cats*, *Les Misérables* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, Julia urged him to produce the British premiere of Steve's legendary, but short lived on Broadway, *Follies* – as she thought he could now afford it! Opening in 1987, Steve wrote several new numbers for the revised production, with Julia and Dame Diana Rigg leading a stellar cast. The sensational two-year run remains the longest running production of *Follies* ever.

In the 90s, it was Cameron's suggestion to Steve and Julia that they create another revue using the material Steve had written for his subsequent shows; written after the mid-70s, starting with *Sweeney Todd*. They tried the show out in Oxford in 1992, again starring Diana Rigg, and later opened in New York with a cast led by the incomparable Julie Andrews. In 1998, Steve collaborated with Julia and Cameron to create a Sondheim segment for Cameron's spectacular star-studded 30-year musical retrospective *Hey, Mr Producer!*, which included Bernadette and Lea.

In 2015, Steve encouraged Cameron to transfer the Tooting Arts Club version of *Sweeney Todd*, set in a real pie shop, into a specially created 100 seat replica of the pie shop on Shaftesbury Avenue starring Jeremy Secomb – it was an enormous success and subsequently he transferred with the production to New York.

During the endless Covid hiatus, it was Steve's suggestion to Cameron to do a third revue as they had nothing else to do, which they both started writing lists of songs for, and our show was born.







Lynne Meadow, Cameron Mackintosh, and Julie Andrews at Opening Night of *Putting It Together* in NY (1993)

## SIDE BY SIDE WITH MTC

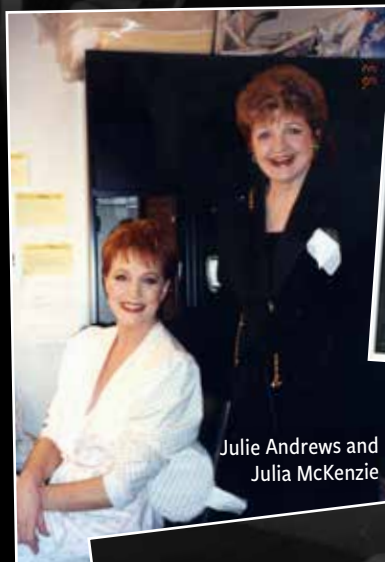
Stephen Sondheim was a Manhattan Theatre Club Board member from 1971 until 1985, and I had the honor of meeting him when I was named MTC's Artistic/Executive Director in the early 70s. At the time, MTC was a fledgling, off-off-Broadway, impoverished nonprofit, whereas Steve had already earned a reputation as a well-known icon of the musical theatre. So I was thrilled that he supported my passion for creating new work and would subsequently help with our fundraising.

When his show *Side by Side by Sondheim* was a hit on Broadway, he brought the company (Ned Sherrin, Millicent Martin, Julia McKenzie, and David Kernan) to perform at our spring gala. It was a treat for them—and all of us—to see Steve accompanying them himself. A couple years later, Steve agreed to bring something from a new show he was working on to a benefit we hosted at Roseland. The lucky people in attendance that night were among the first to see Steve at the piano singing “Johanna” from *Sweeney Todd*.

Then, in 1992, the great Cameron Mackintosh called to ask if MTC would bring his London production of *Putting It Together* to our new home at City Center. “Yes!” was my immediate reply. Cameron hoped Julie Andrews would play the lead, and he flew her to New York to meet with Steve. I will never forget sitting with Cameron in Steve’s beautiful apartment on a Sunday afternoon as he played and sang the entire show for Ms. Andrews. She had not been on a New York stage for 30 years, but that day, she agreed to make her return. Our production of *Putting It Together* with three of the greatest talents in the history of musical theatre remains a highlight of my five-decade career.

Now, in 2025, I’m so grateful to Cameron for bringing *Old Friends* to MTC to open on Broadway. The show is a fantastic celebration of Steve and his illustrious career and a gift to New York City. It’s a rare opportunity to experience a genius’ body of work performed by some of the most gifted artists of our generation—starting, of course, with the fabulous Bernadette Peters (my longtime friend, alum of the MTC stage, and Board member for over 40 years) and the wonderful Lea Salonga. Everyone at this organization—starting with me—is so proud to pay tribute to a legend of the American theatre.

BY LYNNE MEADOW



Julie Andrews and Julia McKenzie



Stephen Sondheim, Lynne Meadow, and Ronald Shechtman



Julie Andrews and Stephen Sondheim



Julie Andrews and Stephen Collins in *Putting It Together* (1993)

## Putting It Together

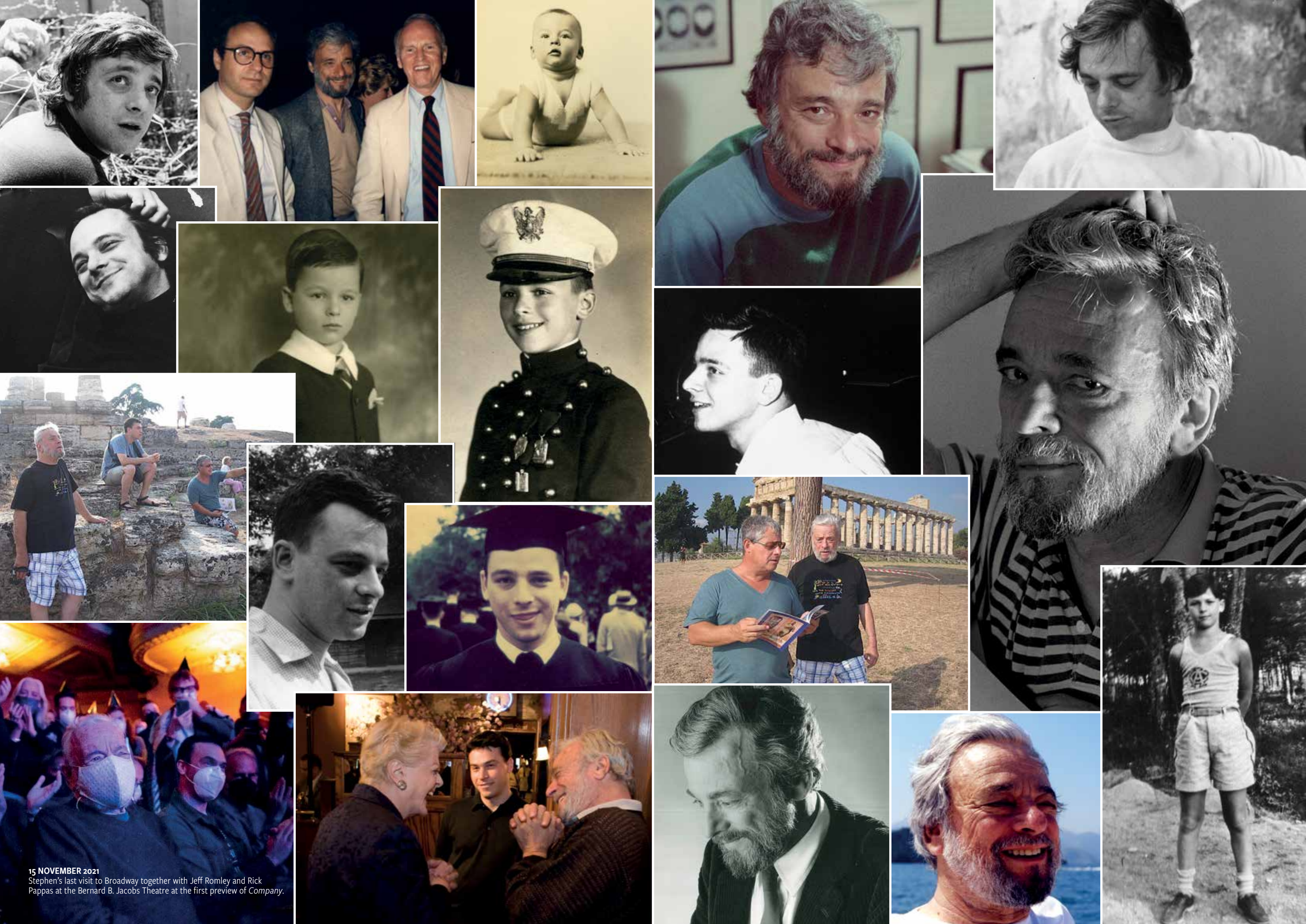


Illustration by Al Hirschfeld (1993) Cameron Mackintosh and *Putting It Together* New York cast and creative team



Matthew Bourne, Lynne Meadow, and Cameron Mackintosh





**15 NOVEMBER 2021**  
Stephen's last visit to Broadway together with Jeff Romley and Rick Pappas at the Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre at the first preview of *Company*.



# PUTTING IT TOGETHER, BIT BY BIT

Director Matthew Bourne and Choreographer Stephen Mear discuss their relationship with Stephen Sondheim

When my 'old friend' Cameron Mackintosh asked me to get involved in a Stephen Sondheim tribute gala in May 2022, I was, of course, thrilled at the chance to get to work with many of the greats of British musical theatre – and a rather special American theatre legend! Then I quickly had an attack of imposter syndrome! Many of our cast have given celebrated, career-defining performances in Mr Sondheim's work, others counted him as a dear personal friend... And I had never even met the man!

My fears were quickly allayed when Cameron teamed me up with Julia McKenzie, one of Sondheim's greatest interpreters, to take what we achieved with the Gala (on which Maria Friedman had worked with me) and with her and Stephen Mear redefined the material as a Great Big Broadway Show, just as Cameron and Steve demanded! I knew I was in safe, collaborative hands with a direct link to the man and his work.

Like many of us, Sondheim, his words, his music, have been there our entire lives. As a 13 year old I was taken to see the great Angela Lansbury in the London Premiere of *Gypsy* (featuring our own Bonnie Langford as Baby June!) and instantly fell in love with the theatre

and a world that I wanted to be a part of. Pretty soon after that I was word-perfect on the original cast albums of Sondheim shows like *Company* and *West Side Story* (still am!) but it wasn't until I made my first trip to NYC in 1979 and was lucky enough to get a ticket for the original cast of *Sweeney Todd* at the Uris (now Gershwin) Theatre that I truly recognised the greatness of Sondheim as composer and lyricist.

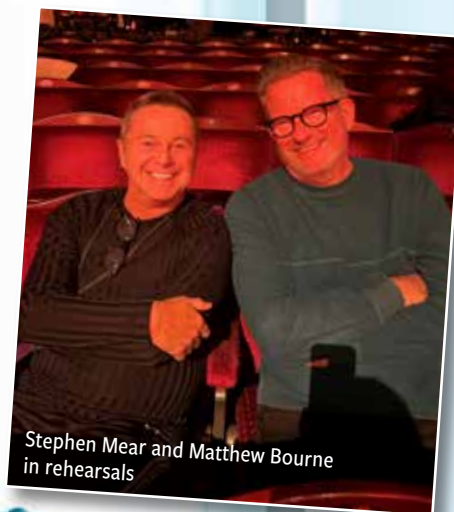
Incredibly, I had also, some years before, seen a production of *Sweeney Todd* at Theatre Royal Stratford East that had inspired Sondheim to write his version. What Sondheim and I saw at Stratford East was a typically entertaining Grand Guignol, blood thirsty, melodrama – where they served hot meat pies to the audience in the interval! But what I saw in the Uris Theatre in 1979 was a glorious, operatic musical-theatre masterwork that shook me to the core with its beauty and daring. At the age of 19, I was instinctively aware that I was witnessing one of the greatest things I would ever see in the theatre.

One of my great regrets is that I never plucked up the courage to introduce myself to Mr Sondheim when he attended one of my dance/theatre shows with my own company,

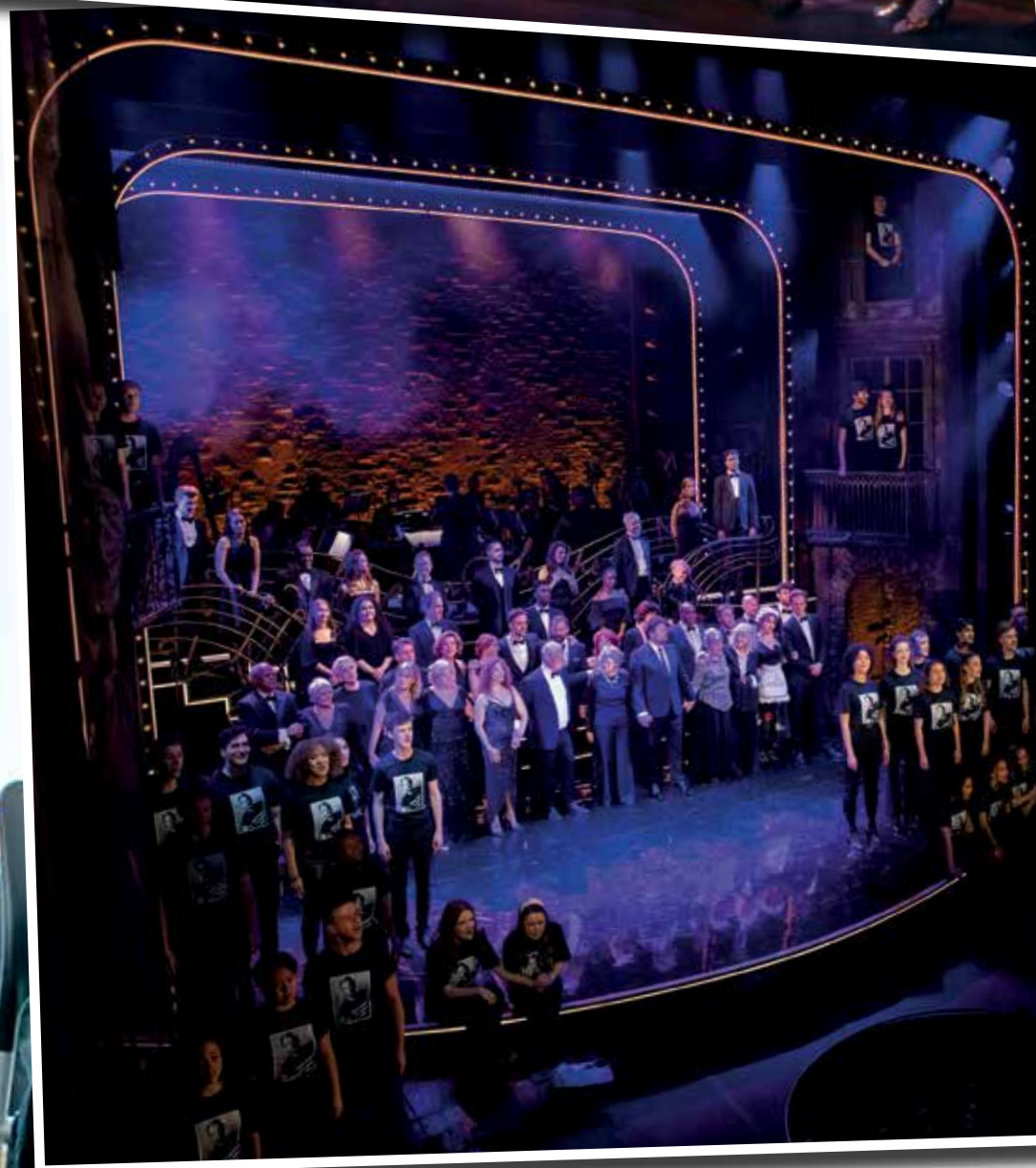
New Adventures. He was a regular audience member in both London and New York (which was an enormous honour in itself) and I would have so loved to have discussed the shows with him and asked him what he felt about the contribution that dance had made to musical theatre. What interested him about wordless story telling through music? Had he ever considered writing a ballet? So many questions... but his reputation for 'honesty' always made me hesitate and I never did approach him.

So, no anecdotes, no personal stories or letters, no collaboration or shared working experience; my 'relationship' with Stephen Sondheim has, like most of us, remained purely through his incomparable work, his words, and his music... and it is more than enough, truly.

BY MATTHEW BOURNE



Stephen Mear and Matthew Bourne in rehearsal



I have worked on four Stephen Sondheim shows: *Follies*, *Putting It Together*, *A Little Night Music* and *Gypsy*. In *Follies*, I was a performer – and was lucky enough to get on for the young lead I was covering in the first week as the poor guy couldn't get out of his contract. I had literally had two days rehearsal with Steve (Mr Sondheim!), Jenna Russell, Sally Ann Triplett and all those fabulous people. So that was quite nerve-racking to have those two days rehearsing with him.

Later in my career, Stephen was around when we did *Gypsy* in Chichester which was amazing. He sat with us, and you could go and ask him anything. He was so generous about making it our own production and not having to do anything the same as it has always been done.

*Putting It Together* was a wonderful thing. Cameron asked me to do that at Chichester Festival Theatre and then later, I did *A Little Night Music* with Julia McKenzie in Japan, it was truly amazing just to watch her work.

Also, I've got to say – when I was in *Follies*, I had the pleasure of working alongside Julia McKenzie then too. I got to watch from the wings when she sang *In Buddy's Eyes* and *Losing My Mind* so thanks to Cameron for bringing me onboard for *Follies* and all of these shows. I'm very grateful.

BY STEPHEN MEAR



# MAPPING OUT THE SKY

## AWARDS AND HONORS



**1950**  
Hutchinson Prize for Musical Composition

**1958**  
**Evening Standard Award:** Best Musical (*West Side Story*)

**1963**  
**Antoinette Perry Award:** Best Musical (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*)

**1970**  
**Drama Desk Awards:** Outstanding Music & Outstanding Lyrics (*Company*)  
**New York Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical (*Company*)  
**Grammy Award:** Best Score from the Original Cast Show Album (*Company*)

**1971**  
**Antoinette Perry Awards:** Best Original Musical Score & Best Lyrics (*Company*)  
**Drama Desk Awards:** Outstanding Music & Outstanding Lyrics (*Follies*)  
**New York Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical (*Follies*)  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Lyrics (*Company*)

**1972**  
**Antoinette Perry Award:** Best Original Musical Score (*Follies*) Honorary Doctorate, Williams College

**1973**  
**Grammy Award:** Best Score from the Original Cast Show Album (*A Little Night Music*)  
**Antoinette Perry Award:** Best Original Musical Score (*A Little Night Music*)

**Drama Desk Awards:** Outstanding Music & Outstanding Lyrics (*A Little Night Music*)  
**New York Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical (*A Little Night Music*)  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Music & Lyrics (*A Little Night Music*)  
1973 to 1981 – President of the Dramatists Guild of America

**1974**  
**Mystery Writers of America, Edgar Allan Poe Award:** Best Motion Picture Screenplay for *The Last of Sheila* with Anthony Perkins

**1975**  
**Grammy Award:** Song of the Year ("Send in the Clowns")  
**Evening Standard Award:** Best Musical (*A Little Night Music*)  
Inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame

**1976**  
**New York Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical (*Pacific Overtures*)  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Music & Lyrics (*Pacific Overtures*)

**1979**  
**Antoinette Perry Award:** Best Original Musical Score (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**Grammy Award:** Best Cast Show Album (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**Drama Desk Awards:** Outstanding Music & Outstanding Lyrics (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**New York Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**Dramatists Guild:** Hull-Warriner Award (*Sweeney Todd*)

**1980**  
**Olivier Award:** Musical of the Year (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**Evening Standard Award:** Best Musical (*Sweeney Todd*)

**1981**  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Music & Lyrics (*Sweeney Todd*)

**1982**  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Lyrics (*Merrily We Roll Along*)

**1983**  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical Score (*Merrily We Roll Along*)  
**Drama League of New York:** Contribution to the Theater Award Elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters

**1984**  
**Grammy Award:** Best Cast Show Album (*Sunday in the Park with George*)  
**Drama Desk Awards:** Outstanding Music & Outstanding Lyrics (*Sunday in the Park with George*)  
**New York Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical (*Sunday in the Park with George*)  
Common Wealth Award of Distinguished Service in Dramatic Arts, Bank of Delaware

**1985**  
**Pulitzer Prize for Drama** (*Sunday in the Park with George*)

**1986**  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical Score (*Sunday in the Park with George*)

**1987**  
**Olivier Award:** Musical of the Year (*Follies*)  
**Evening Standard Award:** Best Musical (*Follies*)  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Peter Hepple Award for Best Musical (*Follies*)

**1988**  
**Antoinette Perry Award:** Best Original Musical Score (*Into the Woods*)  
**Grammy Award:** Best Musical Cast Show Album (*Into the Woods*)  
**Drama Desk Awards:** Outstanding Musical & Outstanding Lyrics (*Into the Woods*)  
**New York Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Musical (*Into the Woods*)

**1989**  
**TIME Magazine:** Creative Edge  
**Award for Excellence in the Arts**  
**York Theatre Company:** Oscar Hammerstein Award  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Original Music (*Into the Woods*)  
**Evening Standard Special Award**

**1990**  
**Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Award:** Best Original Song ("Sooner or Later" in film *Dick Tracy*)  
**Evening Standard Award:** Best Musical (*Into the Woods*)  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Peter Hepple Award for Best Musical (*Into the Woods*)  
Appointed first Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre, Oxford University

**1991**  
**Drama League of New York:** Distinguished Achievement in Musical Theater  
**Olivier Award:** Best New Musical (*Sunday in the Park with George*)

**1992**  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Peter Hepple Award for Best Musical (*Assassins*)

**1993**  
**Helen Hayes Award:** American Express Tribute Award  
Kennedy Center Honors

**1994**  
**Antoinette Perry Award:** Best Original Musical Score (*Passion*)  
**Grammy Award:** Best Musical Show Album (*Passion*)  
**Drama Desk Awards:** Outstanding Music & Outstanding Lyrics (*Passion*)  
**Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle Award:** Best Music and Lyrics (*Assassins*)  
**Olivier Award:** Best Musical Revival (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**International Society of Performing Arts Administrators:** Tiffany (*Distinguished Artists*) Award

**1995**  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Peter Hepple Award for Best Musical (*Company*)

**1996**  
**National Endowment for the Arts:** National Medal of Arts  
Third Annual Japan Musical Award  
**Evening Standard Award:** Best Musical (*Passion*)

**1997**  
**New York Magazine:** Lifetime Achievement Award



**1999**  
**Songwriters Hall of Fame:** Johnny Mercer Award  
**American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers':** Founders' Award

**2000**  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Lyrics (*Saturday Night*)  
**Dramatists Guild:** Frederick Loewe Award Musical America, Composer of the Year  
**Japanese Art Association:** Praemium Imperiale Prize for Theatre/Film

**2001**  
**Fellows of the Phi Beta Kappa Society Award**  
**Olivier Award:** Best New Musical (*Merrily We Roll Along*)

**2002**  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Into the Woods*)

**2004**  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Assassins*)  
**Drama League Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Assassins*)  
**Olivier Award:** Outstanding Musical Production (*Pacific Overtures*)

**2005**  
**Dramatists Guild:** Lifetime Achievement Award

**2006**  
**American Academy of Arts and Letters:** Gold Medal for Music  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**Drama League Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Sweeney Todd*)

**2007**  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Company*)  
**Drama League Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Company*)  
**Trustee Grammy:** Special Merit Award  
**Olivier Award:** Outstanding Musical Production (*Sunday in the Park with George*)

**2008**  
**Antoinette Perry Award:** Special Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre

**2009**  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Lyrics (*Road Show*)  
**Obie Award:** Music & Lyrics (*Road Show*)

**2010**  
Henry Miller's Theatre, New York renamed the Stephen Sondheim Theatre/Royal Academy of Music: Honorary Doctorate of the University of London  
**Evening Standard Award:** Ned Sherrin Award for Best Musical (*Passion*)

**2011**  
**Special Olivier Award**  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Distinguished Services to the Arts  
**Olivier Award:** Best Musical Revival (*Into the Woods*)  
**City of New York:** Handel Medallion

**2012**  
**Drama Desk Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Follies*)  
**Drama League Award:** Outstanding Revival of a Musical (*Follies*)  
**Evening Standard Award:** Ned Sherrin Award for Best Musical (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Peter Hepple Award for Best Musical (*Merrily We Roll Along*)

**2013**  
**Olivier Award:** Best Musical Revival (*Sweeney Todd*)  
**Evening Standard Award:** Ned Sherrin Award for Best Musical (*Merrily We Roll Along*)

**2014**  
**American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers':** Centennial Award  
**Olivier Award:** Best Musical Revival (*Merrily We Roll Along*)  
**Evening Standard Special Award**  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Peter Hepple Award for Best Musical (*Gypsy*)

**2015**  
Presidential Medal of Freedom

**2016**  
**Olivier Award:** Best Musical Revival (*Gypsy*)

**2018**  
Freedom of the City of London in Recognition of his Outstanding Contribution to Musical Theatre  
**Critics' Circle Award:** Peter Hepple Award for Best Musical (*Company*)  
**Olivier Award:** Best Musical Revival (*Follies*)

**2019**  
Queen's Theatre, London renamed the Sondheim Theatre





*OLD FRIENDS* PREMIERED AS A GALA CELEBRATION TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE SONDHEIM FOUNDATION AT THE SONDHEIM THEATRE ON MAY 3, 2022



Gala performance staged by Matthew Bourne and Maria Friedman, choreographed by Stephen Mear





# THE STEPHEN SONDHEIM FOUNDATION

Stephen Sondheim established the Stephen Sondheim Foundation as the largest single beneficiary of future royalties or other income derived from his musical and literary copyrights after his passing.

While the Foundation enjoys the full breadth of powers afforded all not-for-profit charitable foundations, Steve left guidance in his will that the principal purpose of the Foundation be the “support of playwrights, composers and lyricists for the theater who the Directors determine to be in the early stages of their careers... to assist in the development and advancement of their careers.”

It is a fitting tribute to Steve that his longtime friend and colleague Cameron Mackintosh has devised this production to celebrate the genius of his works and contribute to the Foundation, which will sow seeds for the regeneration of the theatre for many generations to come.

Steve’s own exemplary life offers guidance and inspiration to the Foundation’s inaugural Directors as we flesh out specific programs and initiatives to further his charitable aim of making a difference to the lives of fledgling playwrights, composers and lyricists.

Steve founded the Young Playwrights Festival/Young Playwrights, Inc. in 1981, which was for over 35 years the paradigm program in America to find and nurture young writers through a national playwrighting competition that gave their work professional productions and readings. His devout belief in teaching as a sacred profession spurred him to champion arts education in the public schools through a variety of endeavors over the course of his life.

Our path forward is illuminated by Steve’s personal mentorship of the generations of playwrights after him, whether by critiquing a 14-year-old Adam Guettel’s earliest compositions, nurturing Jonathan Larson through his struggles on *Superbia* and *Rent* (as brilliantly captured in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s film of *Tick, Tick...Boom!*), guiding Lin on Spanish lyrics for *West Side Story* and offering feedback on *Hamilton Mixtape*, or teaching the elements of his craft to so many others, like Jason Robert Brown, Jonathan Marc Sherman, Lynn Nottage, Stephen Flaherty and Dave Malloy. Truly the Encourager-in-Chief, Steve never viewed mentoring as an act of generosity so much as the completion of a circle – initiated by Oscar Hammerstein II with a precocious 10-year-old neighbor in Bucks County, Pennsylvania – and a worthy reward in and of itself.

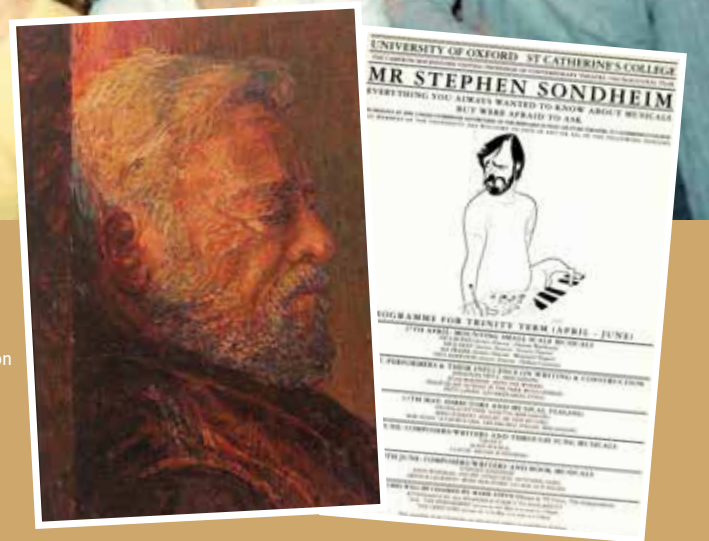
As Anna Leonowens sings in *The King and I*, “If you become a teacher, by your pupils you’ll be taught.” A lyrical notion Oscar remembered, “smiling, the whole while, like the cat who ate the cream,” as he inscribed a photo at Steve’s request shortly before he died:

“For Stevie, my friend and teacher.”

**BY RICK PAPPAS**  
President, The Stephen Sondheim Foundation



To inaugurate the visiting Professorship of Contemporary Theatre I couldn’t have been more fortunate in persuading Steve to be the first Professor. He was a natural teacher and some of the talents he nurtured during his year at Oxford have gone on to make major contributions to the British theatre. His inaugural 1990 programme contained a veritable who’s who of musical theatre talent and his enormous success in the Chair set a standard of inspiration to future Professors that could not be bettered - *Cameron Mackintosh*



In 2015 Cameron commissioned Francis Hamel to paint portraits of the twenty-seven Visiting Professors. Francis describes here his experience of capturing Sondheim on canvas.

## THE OXFORD CHAIR

I first met Stephen Sondheim on Cameron’s boat in the summer of 2013, we bonded over a shared interest in cryptic crosswords although even in his advanced years his mental agility and dexterity with language far outshone mine. Two years later he was the first of the Oxford Professors of Contemporary Theatre to be asked to sit for his portrait, it being thought that if he agreed then most of the others would be likely to follow suit. This turned out to be true.

The first sitting, at his home in New York opened with my saying, “Thank you, I know this isn’t your choice” to which he replied “No it isn’t”. It wasn’t a good start but by the end of the sitting he had warmed up and agreed to continue the process at a hotel in London on his next visit.

This is an excerpt from my diary written in March 2015 just after the first sitting.

“I guess his reluctance to sit is understandable in a very elderly man who probably tries to avoid too much time looking in the mirror and who must feel self-conscious about having his time-worn face consigned to history as the only painted record of his famous physiognomy. He has a good head of hair and a nicely trimmed beard which I sense had been clipped and combed for the occasion but his eyes

are obviously sore and neither opens as much as it did. One can open quite well but seems to look in a different direction from the other, the squint is masked by heavy asymmetrical lids. He has bags beneath the eyes, quite marked and discoloured skin with quite a few blemishes but, and I speak as the auctioneer might, “the whole is of good colour, nice dramatic intensity and of excellent provenance, one slightly damaged eye, head generally leonine in character and sound of mind” to say the least! He is witty, bolshy, sharp as a whistle and has clearly learnt to say no in a life where the demands on his time must be relentless. No one but Cameron could have persuaded him to sit for a portrait and, I suppose in the circumstances he was happier with “the devil he knew” than with a total stranger turning up.

He told me the extraordinary story of how he came to buy his house in New York. He was standing in the garden of the house agonising over whether he could really afford to buy the place when he noticed a figure come to the window of the neighbouring house, open it and, with her hands resting on the sill, look out across the garden. He realised to his amazement that it was Katharine Hepburn. Enraptured, he watched as another figure came up behind her and put

his arms round her. It was Spencer Tracy. He decided there and then to buy the house although he did say that Hepburn used to complain volubly about the noise from his piano.

Richard Eyre wrote about the finished collection of portraits saying...

“Francis Hamel has used the freedom of his commission to look at his subjects with a questioning curiosity. The surprise is how untheatrical these people are, there’s no swish or swagger. No self-display or sense of self-importance...what marks the faces in these portraits is thoughtfulness, many tinged with an air of melancholy. If there is a prevailing feeling that emerges - both from the painter and the subjects - it is self-doubt, an awareness that both parties know how difficult it is in any medium to make a piece of work that does justice to the infinite variety of human life... Looking at the portraits of Arthur Miller, Stephen Sondheim, Michael Frayn and Tom Stoppard, it’s hard not to construe that you’re looking at individuals who have achieved something considerable and lasting: they’ve changed the specific gravity of our language.”

This is certainly true of Sondheim.

**BY FRANCIS HAMEL**  
Rousham, April 2022