Becoming a Broadway Baby

Felice Garcia
mezzo-soprano

Senior Recital

with

Christopher Lash, piano

Monday, April 13, 2009
5:30pm
Beam Music Center
Doc Rando Recital Hall
~ Program ~

An evening of music by Stephen Sondheim

Invocation and Instructions to the Audience

Broadway Baby

Lovely

No One Is Alone

Some People

Music by Jule Styne
Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Sooner or Later

Somewhere

Music by Jule Styne
Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Being Alive

Felice would like to give a special thanks to Christopher Lash for his help in arranging the music for this performance.
She would also like to thank Amanda Mura for help on the script.

Felice Garcia is a student of Julina Gilmore. This Performance is offered in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Bachelor of Arts in Recital Concentration.

Becoming a Broadway Baby is one girl’s journey to New York, specifically, 42nd street. Veronica has dreamed her whole life of moving to New York to be in a Broadway show. She moves to the big city right out of high school with very little money in her pocket but a heart full of hope. Along her journey she finds a lot of dirty dishes at her daytime job as a waitress, while being turned down countless times at hundreds of auditions. Does she get a big break and learn how to be a “Broadway Baby”? 
Last month, Stephen Sondheim celebrated his 79th birthday and during most of those years, he has been a crucial part of American music. With Oscar Hammerstein as a mentor and father figure, Sondheim grew up speaking a "language of opening numbers, ensemble turns, and comedy routines." Stylistically, Sondheim is very precise when it comes to lyric writing, exact rhymes, proper punctuation, and flawless prosody.  

*West Side Story* was Sondheim's first success as a lyricist in 1957. He teamed up with legendary composer Leonard Bernstein to create one of the most famous Broadway musicals of all time. Sondheim claims that he modified his own style of writing to suit Bernstein's music. "Somewhere" was originally performed offstage by a soprano and contains an excerpt from Beethoven's 'Emperor' Piano Concerto.

Cole Porter and Irving Berlin both turned down composing opportunities for the story of *Gypsy*. In 1959 Sondheim teamed up with Robbins and Laurents who also worked on *West Side Story*. The song "Some People" shows that Rose, the main character, has big dreams. The song also previews another one of the hits from the show "Everything's Coming Up Roses". The reviews for *Gypsy* were all very positive and it would give Sondheim the credibility he needed to write both music and lyrics for future compositions.

Sondheim dedicated the score of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) to his "friend and teacher," Oscar Hammerstein. In fewer than 100 pages, the characters and setting of this show are not meant to be real. "Lovely" is about Philia, the female love interest of the protagonist, Hero. She is a virgin courtesan who is tricked into working for Hero's family. In this song, she expresses that she does not have many talents other than being "Lovely".

Sondheim enjoyed collaborating with other visionaries. For example, he and director producer Harold Prince first worked together on *West Side Story*. They would then work together on *Company* in 1970. The musical is about the adult relationships and is full of mature content. The ending of the musical is completed with one of Sondheim's most famous songs, "Being Alive". It is written in a simple "AABA" form with the "B" section deriving from the "A" section, which mirrors the circular model of the show. The score earned him Tony Awards for best music and lyrics and best musical.

Sondheim wrote twenty-two songs for *Follies* (1971) based on the Ziegfeld Follies girls. The show is centered on age and memory of four characters: Ben, Phyllis, Buddy, and Sally. The story contains recollections of two couples' lives when they performed with the Follies. There is very little dialogue and the songs forward the action. "Could I Leave You?" is about a woman unhappy with her husband, and the dramatic lyrics are set to a waltz. On the other end of the spectrum is "Broadway Baby": a classic musical theatre song and one of Sondheim's most recognizable songs.

For *Into the Woods* (1987), Sondheim wanted to write something "fun and entertaining" and he chose to collaborate with James Lapine on this whimsical musical. The story brings together many characters from different fairy tales like *Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel* and more. Sondheim didn't want a "happily ever after" ending because he felt that it "encouraged selfishness and social responsibility." Cinderella sings "No One Is Alone" to Red Riding Hood. Sondheim says the message of the song is "everything you do affects everyone else."

"Sooner or Later" is from a 1990 movie, *Dick Tracy*, starring Warren Beatty. Sondheim won an Academy Award for the song, sung by Madonna for the movie. *The Frogs* is one of Sondheim's most recent works and opened on Broadway in 2004 starring Nathan Lane. The ancient Greek comedy musical was originally performed in a swimming pool at Yale in the 70s. Some of the lyrics to "Invocation and Instructions to the Audience" have been changed to suit performances to dry land.

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2 Ibid, 19.
3 Ibid, 168