Nebraska Wesleyan University presents ...

Merrily We Roll Along

Music and lyrics by
STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Book by
GEORGE FURTH

Based on the original play by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart
Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick
Originally directed on Broadway by Harold Prince

Originally produced on Broadway by Lord Grade, Martin Starger, Robert Fryer and Harold Prince in association with Ruth Mitchell and Howard Haines.

Directed and choreographed by Anne McAlexander

PRODUCTION TEAM

Music Director.................................................................................................................................................................................Talea Bloch
Assistant Director.............................................................................................................................................................................Elke Myers
Accompanist, Band Conductor and Keyboard 1......................................................................................................................Janet Malone
Keyboard 2...............................................................................................................................................................................Rachel Dolence
Stage Manager...........................................................................................................................................................................Alexis Timmons
Assistant Stage Managers....................................................................................................................................Anna Dorr, Audrey Stecher
Lighting Designer...........................................................................................................................................................................Sierra Smith
Sound Designer.............................................................................................................................................................................Emily Counts
Scenic Designer...........................................................................................................................................................................Jamie Bullins
Assistant Scenic Designer.................................................................................................................................Taylor Walters-Riggsbee
Technical Director..................................................................................................................................................Brendan Greene-Walsh
Props Manager.................................................................................................................................................................Erin Bell
Costume Designer.............................................................................................................................................................Valerie Cuevas
Hair and Makeup Designer............................................................................................................................................Kabi Mumford
Fight Consultant..............................................................................................................................................................Ryan Kathman

Order tickets online / get latest details about productions, tickets and safety measures nebrwesleyan.edu/theatre

Call or email the box office
402.465.2384
Monday–Friday, 3–5 p.m.
theatre@nebrwesleyan.edu
CAST

FRANK .................................................................................................................................................................Tabor Cross
MARY ........................................................................................................................................................................Theresa Chambers
CHARLEY .................................................................................................................................................................Alex Rownd
BETH ..........................................................................................................................................................................Natalie Crane
GUSSIE .................................................................................................................................................................Lea Ramos
JOE ..............................................................................................................................................................................Trevor Harr
FRANK JR .................................................................................................................................................................Emily Gardner, Kyle Goeken, Amanda King
COMPANY .................................................................................................................................................................Merrill Mitchell, Piper Monson, Rico Santana, Colin Swanson

SWINGS .................................................................................................................................................................Makenzie Adams, John Alden, Katherine Baier

PROLOGUE

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG.................................................................................................................................................................Company

ACT ONE

ACT I SCENE 1: BEL-AIR, CALIFORNIA, 1976
THAT FRANK .................................................................................................................................................................Company
TRANSITION 1 .................................................................................................................................................................Company

ACT I SCENE 2: NBC STUDIO, NEW YORK CITY, 1973
OLD FRIENDS - LIKE IT WAS ..................................................................................................................................................Mary
FRANKLIN SHEPARD, INC ....................................................................................................................................................Charley
TRANSITION 2 .................................................................................................................................................................Company

ACT I SCENE 3: FRANK’S APARTMENT, NEW YORK CITY, 1968
OLD FRIENDS .................................................................................................................................................................Frank, Charley, Mary
GROWING UP .................................................................................................................................................................Frank, Guusie
TRANSITION 3 .................................................................................................................................................................Company

ACT I SCENE 4: MANHATTAN COURTHOUSE, NEW YORK CITY, 1967
NOT A DAY GOES BY ..........................................................................................................................................................Beth
NOW YOU KNOW ...........................................................................................................................................................Scotty, Mary, Tyler, Charley, Frank, Joe, Jerome, Company

ACT TWO

ACT II SCENE 1: ALVIN THEATRE, NEW YORK CITY, 1964
ACT 2 - OPENING ..............................................................................................................................................................Gussie
IT’S A HIT .............................................................................................................................................................................Joe, Frank, Charley, Mary, Beth
TRANSITION 4 .................................................................................................................................................................Company

ACT II SCENE 2: GUSSIE AND JOE’S BROWNSTONE, NEW YORK CITY, 1962
THE BLOB .................................................................................................................................................................Gussie, Company
GROWING UP (REPRISE) ..................................................................................................................................................Gussie
GOOD THING GOING ..........................................................................................................................................................Charley, Frank
TRANSITION 5 .................................................................................................................................................................Company

ACT II SCENE 3: THE DOWNTOWN CLUB, NEW YORK CITY, 1960
BOBBY AND JACKIE AND JACK ........................................................................................................................................Charley, Beth, Frank, Pianist
NOT A DAY GOES BY (REPRISE) ....................................................................................................................................Beth, Frank, Mary
TRANSITION 6 .................................................................................................................................................................Company

ACT II SCENE 4: NEW YORK CITY, 1957-1959
OPENING DOORS ..............................................................................................................................................................Charley, Frank, Mary, Joe, 1st Girl, Company
TRANSITION 7 .................................................................................................................................................................Beth, Frank Jr., Mrs. Spencer, Company

ACT II SCENE 5, A ROOFTOP, NEW YORK CITY 1957
OUR TIME ...........................................................................................................................................................................Frank, Charley, Mary, Company
DIRECTOR’S NOTE

“Yesterday is done.” Stephen Sondheim reminds us in the opening musical line of Merrily We Roll Along that we cannot go back and change the choices of our past that have led to today. Yet, that is exactly how the story, based on the Kaufman and Hart play of the same name is structured—moving backwards through time, the show reveals piece by piece of youthful hope, growing optimism, and the reminder that our dreams will always be with us.

When I first began working on Merrily We Roll Along, I, like so many who have worked on or grown to love this quirky, commercially (and according to many artistically) unsuccessful show written by the team that brought us the extremely successful and well-reviewed Company, believed it to be a piece that highlights regret and the difficult choices people face as they grow up and aspire for success. But after spending the last several weeks with this group of vibrant and passionate young actors and theatre artists, I have quite a different perspective.

Yes, Frank's story is a cautionary one, but it does not have to be our story. Throughout the show, Frank is again and again offered other choices that might have led to a different outcome—choices that might have allowed for both artistic and financial success, that might not have taken his relationships and friendships for granted, choices that might not have gotten in the way of his dream. The more time I spend with this show, the more it becomes clear that this story about growing up is full of hope and optimism.

This is not simply a story about what happens when an artist sacrifices artistic integrity for money or losing friendships based on those and other choices (two clear themes that run deeper than they appear on the surface). This story is about being able to have both commercial and artistic success, about the friends that fight for us and alongside us as we grow up, and about not taking what we have for granted. “Dreams don’t die,” a line sung over and over on this journey, reminds us that our dreams stay with us, whether we let things get in the way of them or not. They stay with us.

This story takes place over 20 years, moving backwards from 1976 to 1957. These two decades represent a time in history where we as a nation lost our innocence and were awakened to societal problems that were not and still have not been fully addressed or resolved. The major events of these two decades encompass everything from the civil rights movement to the women's liberation movement; from the Vietnam war to the subsequent protests against it; from the Cold War to the space race. While not a major focus of the script, at specific times the writers make a distinct choice to remind the audience of the events of the time the scenes are set and the way society regarded these issues at the time. Even 30 years after this show first premiered on Broadway, modern audiences may be struck by the reminder that issues that seem so far away, are still so present and unresolved.

At its heart, this is a story about friendship and those people who will fight alongside us in our most difficult and successful times, and cherishing those in our lives who do so. It is a show that allows us to look back in order to find a way forward. And it is a show that reminds us to tend our dreams.

- Anne McAlexander, director and choreographer

SPECIAL THANKS

A very special thanks to Kate Demoret, Julie Wilshusen, Carson Cerney, Jay Scott Chipman, Wendy Hunt, Ryan Kathman, the faculty and staff of the NWU Theatre Department for their work and support, and the campus-wide community of Nebraska Wesleyan University for their support of the arts.
UPCOMING PRODUCTIONS

Macbeth
NWU Amphitheatre
PUBLIC Performances: May 13-15, May 20-22 at 7:30 p.m.
May 16 and 23 at 2 p.m.

Directing IV: Advanced Directing Projects
AND THEN THERE WERE NONE: April 29-May 1 at 7:30 p.m.
May 2 at 2 p.m.

*For ticketing and further information, contact the Box Office.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE ‘21-’22 SEASON:

Head Over Heels
PERFORMANCE DATES: August 19-21, 26-28 at 7:30 p.m.
August 22 and 29 at 2 p.m.

*Limited seating for ALL performances due to campus and city-wide mandated COVID-19 safety precautions. Tickets are REQUIRED to attend ALL productions. For any questions or concerns, please email: theatre@nebrwesleyan.edu

THEATRE FACULTY AND STAFF

Department Chair  Jay Scott Chipman, Ph.D., S.D.C.
Manager of Theatre Operations  Julie Wilshusen, M.A.

Faculty
Ryan Kathman, M.F.A., AEA
Joan Korte, M.F.A.
Anne McAlexander, M.F.A., AEA

Adjunct Faculty
Talea C.M.S. Bloch, D.M.A.
Sasha Dobson, M.F.A.
Courtney Ring, B.P.A.
Carson Cerney, M.F.A.
Scott Shomaker, M.F.A.
Petra Walqvist, P.G.D.
Becky Boesen

Staff
Costume Shop Manager  Rebecca Armstrong, B.F.A.
Light and Sound Technician  Joshua Brauer, B.F.A.
Administrative Assistant  Kate Demoret, B.F.A.
Technical Director  Brendan Greene-Walsh, M.F.A.
Master Carpenter  Lauren Elizabeth Spilinak, B.F.A.

Emeriti Professors
Alice J. Jaswal, Ph.D.
Michael Reese, M.F.A.

PRODUCTION CREW

CHILD WRANGLER.................Claire Opheim
FLY CREW............................Makaelah Hutchins
LIGHTBOARD OPERATOR...........Elke Myers
SCENE SHOP ASSISTANTS..............Tristen Brummer,
Kaedyn Campbell, Anna Dorr
SCENIC CONSTRUCTION/PAINTING......THTR 1400 Students
SOUNDBOARD OPERATOR..............Emily Counts
SPOTLIGHT OPERATORS.................John Alden,
Jovany Hernandez-Corona
STAGE CREW......................Makenzie Adams, Katherine Baier,
Harlie Delay, Natalie Kroll, Dio Raquel, Jr.,
Drew Sinnard, Sophie Williams
WARDROBE CREW...................Kenzie Hansen, Bailey Leuty

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG
is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.
www.mtishows.com

Any video and/or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
We extend an extra special thanks to our friends at the Pace Woods Foundation for their ongoing support and commitment to the Nebraska Wesleyan University Theatre Department.

As COVID-19 upended our world, we knew that our students would experience the heartbreak of a drastic decline in departmental travel events, social outings, and on-campus guest artists. One of the canceled travel events, unfortunately, was the spring 2021 “New York City Trip” that has become a fond and anxiously-awaited tradition for students, faculty, and staff.

However, with the greatest generosity and kindness, the Pace Woods Foundation made it possible for the Nebraska Wesleyan University Theatre Department to bring New York City straight to our students. With their support, we sponsored a semester-long series of virtual experiences that we named NYC@NWU. It has been filled with workshops, one-on-one conversations, mock auditions, portfolio and presentation critiques and in-depth Q&A’s with talented artists, actors, designers, writers, directors, producers and professionals from New York City and across the country.

By NWU faculty and staff carefully crafting each workshop experience to help build skills, knowledge, and confidence, our students are better prepared to enter the world of professional theatre. Being able to listen to the real-world stories and interact with over three dozen professionals in the industry has given our students an inside glimpse at their own successful futures after they graduate from Nebraska Wesleyan University.