

Shaw FESTIVAL

Shaw Festival Presents Follies: In Concert

Media Release #19

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, August 26, 2008 ... Final rehearsals are underway for the Shaw Festival's concert production of Stephen Sondheim's legendary *Follies*. **Follies: In Concert** is presented for a limited engagement in the Festival Theatre, with performances on August 29, September 12 and 27, and October 4.

Follies, with almost 50 actors, singers and dancers in the original cast, is rarely staged. The Shaw's Concert, featuring full orchestration, minimal staging and a highly abridged book, is a great fit with the skills of the Company's actors, singers and musicians and includes 21 of the 45 musical Ensemble members cast for the 2008 Season.

With a book by James Goldman, the original *Follies* production won seven Tony Awards. "Broadway Baby", "I'm Still Here", "In Buddy's Eyes" and "Losing My Mind" are *Follies* songs that have become celebrated Broadway standards. Set in the early '70s, the piece explores the time between the World Wars in the American musical, juxtaposing the romanticism of the past with the cynicism of the present, and ultimately revealing the foolishness of living in the past.

Two unhappily married couples, Buddy (**Jay Turvey**) and Sally (**Glynis Ranney**) Plummer and Ben (**George Masswohl**) and Phyllis (**Melanie Janzen**) Stone, are the focus of the story. Sally and Phyllis were showgirls together thirty years earlier, as were many of the other guests at a party. As characters begin to relive their lives and careers, the past seems to seep into the present as ghosts of their former selves appear.

In *Follies*, the past and present collide in the music as well as the story. Its score encapsulates the history of musical theatre. Characters in the present express themselves in what was a contemporary musical style. Characters reminiscing about the past or suffering psychological breakdown sing "pastiche" songs that represent musical theatre styles through time.

Follies: In Concert is the second Sondheim musical to be presented by the Shaw Festival this season. The sophisticated *A Little Night Music*, directed by Morris Panych, continues to run in the Court House Theatre until October 4.

The cast of **Follies: In Concert** also includes **Thom Allison, Neil Barclay, Donna Belleville, Carol Forte, Deborah Hay, Patty Jamieson, Gabrielle Jones, Chilina Kennedy, Lorne Kennedy, Julie Martell, Mike Nadajewski, Melanie Phillipson, Kiera Sangster, Goldie Semple, Jacqueline Thair** and **Mark Uhre**.

Follies: In Concert is directed by **Valerie Moore**, with musical direction by **Paul Sportelli**, design by **William Schmuck**, lighting design by **Kevin Lamotte**, and sound design by **John Lott**. The stage management team includes Stage Manager **Judy Farthing** and Assistant Stage Manager **Amy Jewell**.

For tickets and information, visit www.shawfest.com or call 1-800-511-7429 or 905-468-2172 (local).

Follies: In Concert is sponsored by **Paradigm Capital Inc.**

The 2008 season is proudly presented by **HSBC Bank Canada/HSBC Bank USA, N.A.**

Follies: In Concert

book by James Goldman

music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Produced originally on Broadway by Harold Prince

By special arrangement with Cameron Mackintosh

Follies concert version is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.

421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019

Phone: 212-541-4684 Fax: 212-397-4684 www.MTIshows.com

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For more information, or to download images from our image bank to accompany this release, members of the media may contact:

Odette Yazbeck

Public Relations Director

905-468-2153 or

1-800-657-1106 ext. 222

odette@shawfest.com

Patti Broughton

Public Relations Co-ordinator

905-468-2153 or

1-800-657-1106 ext. 224

pbroughton@shawfest.com