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Is there anything more purely enjoyable than sitting at a cafe table on a sidewalk and watching the world go by? The speculations are endless: I wonder what she is smiling about? Or why he is carrying those flowers? That couple who has stopped across the street: are they breaking up, or just discussing dinner plans? That reminds me, I was grumpy last night, must apologize later...

If you think about it, the fact that we can derive so much information simply from the way someone walks past us is a kind of miracle. We have evolved extraordinary powers of observation and deduction: we can read cues in the angle of a head, the cut of a jacket, or a difference of inches in how far apart two people sit. Even when we are dropped into the middle of a different culture, where we can't read all the outward signs with confidence, we still know the range of things - love, anger, jealousy, embarrassment etc. - that could be going on inside because we are watching fellow human beings. We are empathy machines.

The moment someone walks on stage, this machine goes into overdrive.

Why? Because we know two things: the clues here have been carefully chosen, and if we pay attention now there will be a pay-off. When a second character enters, the possibilities increase exponentially. When someone next to us laughs or nods, we go up a gear: what did I miss? As the show progresses, the air in the room changes: our breathing, our pheromones, our stillness or movement all matter. And the reward for this sustained attention is that time itself changes. When your perception is awakened, each moment has more colour, even after the show has finished. For a while, you will see the world, and the sad, joyful, fearful people around you, more clearly.

It's worth keeping your empathy machine in good condition.



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The Macdonald Heaslip Lounge display case features artifacts from the Shaw Festival Archives, including past productions of *Heartbreak House*. Researched and arranged by Barbara Inglese, Secretary of the International Shaw Society and Shaw's Community Engagement, Outreach and Education Department.

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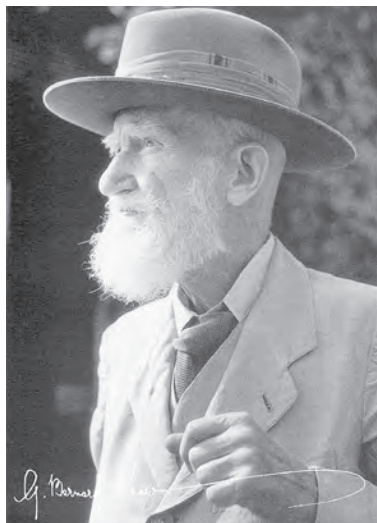
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Alexandra Gratten backstage (*Anything Goes*, 2025). Photo by Dahlia Katz.

FESTIVAL THEATRE, APRIL 24 TO OCTOBER 3

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Funny Girl

Music by Jule Styne, Lyrics by Bob Merrill

Book by Isobel Lennart

from an original story by Miss Lennart

Produced for the Broadway Stage by Ray Stark

New York Production Supervised by Jerome Robbins

Original Production Directed by Garson Kanin

with MATT ALFANO, DAMIEN ATKINS, ALANA BRIDGEWATER,
CASSANDRA CONSIGLIO, JANELLE COOPER, CAMILLE EANGA-SELENCE,
SARA FARB, AMARIAH FAULKNER, SHARRY FLETT, ÉLODIE GILLET,
DANIEL GREENBERG, JEFF IRVING, PATTY JAMIESON, QASIM KHAN,
JADEN KIM, GRAEME KITAGAWA, LAWRENCE LIBOR, ALLISON McCAUGHEY,
MADELYN MIYASHITA, CHERYL MULLINGS, JADE REPETA, TRAVIS SEETOO,
JEREMIAH SPARKS, ÉAMON STOCKS, MIKAYLA STRADIOTTO,
GABRIELLA SUNDAR SINGH, TAURIAN TEELUCKSINGH,
JACQUELINE THAIR and SHAWN WRIGHT

Directed by EDA HOLMES

Music Direction by PAUL SPORTELLI

Choreographed by PARKER ESSE

Set & Costumes designed by JAMES LAVOIE

Lighting designed by SONOYO NISHIKAWA

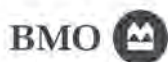
Sound designed by COREY MACFADYEN & KAITLYN MacKINNON

This production is dedicated to the memory of The Hon. William J. Saunderson.

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MUSIC DIRECTOR SUPPORTED BY

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Front cover: Sara Farb, illustration design by Key Gordon.

"Oh, go away from me: I won't get married at all:
what is it but heartbreak and disappointment?"

Bernard Shaw, *John Bull's Other Island*



Sara Farb as
Fanny Brice.

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The Cast

In Alphabetical Order

Eddie Ryan	MATT ALFANO
Florenz Ziegfeld Jr	DAMIEN ATKINS
Mrs Meeker	ALANA BRIDGEWATER
Swing	CASSANDRA CONSIGLIO
Mrs Strakosh	JANELLE COOPER
Ensemble	CAMILLE EANGA-SELENCE
Fanny Brice	SARA FARB
Swing	AMARIAH FAULKNER
Mrs O'Malley	SHARRY FLETT
Bubbles/Vera/Ensemble	ÉLODIE GILLETT
Swing	DANIEL GREENBERG
Adolph/Ensemble	JEFF IRVING
Mrs Brice	PATTY JAMIESON
Nick Arnstein	QASIM KHAN
Ensemble	JADEN KIM
Paul/Ensemble	GRAEME KITAGAWA
Heckie/Ensemble	LAWRENCE LIBOR
Ensemble	ALLISON McCAUGHEY
Ensemble	MADELYN MIYASHITA
Emma	CHERYL MULLINGS
Polly/Ensemble	JADE REPETA
Ensemble	TRAVIS SEETOO
John/Renaldi	JEREMIAH SPARKS
Swing	ÉAMON STOCKS
Mimsey/Ensemble	MIKAYLA STRADIOTTO
Mrs Nadler/Ensemble	GABRIELLA SUNDAR SINGH
Tenor Soloist/Ensemble	TAURIAN TEELUCKSINGH
Maude/Jenny/Ensemble	JACQUELINE THAIR
Tom Keeney/Ensemble	SHAWN WRIGHT

Stage Manager	DORA TOMASSI
Assistant Stage Manager	ANNIE McWHINNIE
Assistant Stage Manager	SANG-SANG LEE
Production Stage Manager	LISA RUSSELL
Associate Production Stage Manager	LEIGH McCLYMONT

**The Ensemble
in *Funny Girl*.**



Assistant Director	CARA REBECCA
Assistant Choreographer	ALLISON McCAUGHEY
Assistant Set Designer	AURORA JUDGE
Assistant Costume Designer	SAHDIA CAYEMITHE
Associate Lighting Designer	JEFF PYBUS
Assistant Lighting Designer	HINA NISHIOKA
Orchestral Adaptation	PAUL SPORTELLI
Associate Conductor/Rehearsal Pianist	RYAN deSOUZA
Keyboard Programmer	DAVID ATKINSON
Music Engraving	MICHAEL LERNER
Metcalf Foundation Music Intern	ALEXA BELGRAVE
Dance Captain	GRAEME KITAGAWA
Voice and Dialect Coach	JEFFREY SIMLETT

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Cara Rebecca, Ryan Mahon from Properties, Jenny L. Wright, Additional Costumes by Susan Dicks and Co., Stefan Dean Bespoke Tailoring, Camden Towne Fine Leather Goods.

UNDERSTUDIES

CASSANDRA CONSIGLIO, Ensemble, Vera, Bubbles, Polly, Mimsey; AMARIAH FAULKNER, Ensemble, Mrs Nadler; ÉLODIE GILLET, Mrs Strakosh; DANIEL GREENBERG, Ensemble, Adolph, Florenz Ziegfeld Jr, John, Renaldi; JEFF IRVING, Nick Arnstein; GRAEME KITAGAWA, Eddie Ryan; LAWRENCE LIBOR, Ensemble, Tenor Soloist; ALLISON McCAUGHEY, Mrs Meeker; MADELYN MIYASHITA, Emma; CHERYL MULLINGS, Mrs Brice; JADE REPETA, Fanny Brice; TRAVIS SEETO, Ensemble, Tom Keeney; ÉAMON STOCKS, Ensemble, Heckie, Paul; MIKAYLA STRADIOTTO, Ensemble, Jenny, Maude; JACQUELINE THAIR, Mrs O'Malley; JENNY L. WRIGHT, Emergency Rehearsal Cover, Emma
LIZ KING, Assistant Stage Manager; SANG-SANG LEE, Assistant Stage Manager;
LEIGH McClymont, Stage Manager

*Approximate running time: Act 1 - 1 hour, 25 minutes, Act 2 - 55 minutes,
for a total of 2 hours and 40 minutes including one intermission.*

Musical Numbers

Act 1

Overture	Orchestra
Poker Chant #1	Mrs Brice, Mrs Strakosh
If A Girl Isn't Pretty	Mrs Strakosh, Mrs Brice, Mrs Meeker, Mrs O'Malley, Eddie, Heckie, Ensemble
I'm the Greatest Star	Fanny
Eddie's Fifth Encore	Eddie
Cornet Man	Fanny, Eddie, Ensemble
Nicky Arnstein #1	Fanny
Who Taught Her Everything?	Mrs Brice, Eddie
His Love Makes Me Beautiful	Tenor Soloist, Fanny, Ensemble
I Want To Be Seen With You Tonight	Nick, Fanny
Nicky Arnstein #2	Fanny
Henry Street	Ensemble
People	Fanny
Poker Chant #2	Mrs Brice, Mrs Strakosh
You Are Woman, I Am Man	Nick, Fanny
Don't Rain On My Parade	Fanny

Intermission

Act 2

Entr'acte	Orchestra
Sadie, Sadie	Fanny, Ensemble
Find Yourself A Man	Eddie, Mrs Strakosh, Mrs Brice
Rat-Tat-Tat/Private Schwartz	Eddie, Jenny, Ensemble, Fanny
Who Are You Now?	Fanny
Don't Rain On My Parade (reprise)	Nick
Downtown Rag	Ensemble
The Music That Makes Me Dance	Fanny
Finale Act Two	Fanny

Orchestra

PAUL SPORTELLI, Conductor; RYAN deSOUZA, Associate Conductor/Keyboard 1;
JONAH NUNG, Keyboard 2/Assistant Conductor; ALEXA BELGRAVE, Substitute
Keyboards; ANDY BALLANTYNE, Flute/Alto Saxophone; SHIRANTHA BEDDAGE/
SASHA BOYCHOUK, Bass Clarinet/Baritone Saxophone (alternating);
ERICA BESTON/KATHRYN SUGDEN, Violin 1/Concertmaster (alternating);
CAITLIN BOYLE/JEEWON KIM, Viola (alternating); DAIN CARANDANG, Clarinet/
Tenor Saxophone; ALEX GRANT, Cello; JASON LOGUE, Trumpet;
ROSS MacINTYRE, Bass; TIM MULLIGAN, Drums/Percussion;
CHRISTINE PASSMORE, French Horn; ROB SOMERVILLE, Trombone



Clockwise from top: Sara Farb as Fanny with the Ensemble. Qasim Khan as Nick Arnstein. Damien Atkins as Florenz Ziegfeld Jr.

Music Director's Note

by Paul Sportelli

Funny Girl is a bucket list musical for me, and I'm thrilled to be music directing it at the Shaw Festival. I have a long history with the piece: my Mom played Fanny Brice with our local civic theatre when I was a kid, and I have vivid recollections of watching rehearsals. I owned the original Broadway recording, and I nearly wore that vinyl record out.

It has been interesting to observe my changing relationship with the musical: for decades it has been something I loved but stood outside of. For the past few months, I have started living inside the work and I have grown to appreciate it even more.

Composer Jule Styne and lyricist Bob Merrill have written a tremendous score; *Funny Girl* contains so many wonderful songs. Styne is a master of musical theatre composition: the melodies are memorable (Beware: earworms!), and he brings a harmonic richness and complexity to the piece that gives it an abundance of colour. When he wants to, he perfectly evokes vaudeville of the period, and his use of half-steps in these melodies masterfully conjures that world. But as someone writing this musical in the early 1960s, he avails himself of all possible compositional and harmonic tools, including Modernism, Impressionism, bitonality (two keys operating at the same time), changing time signatures, and recitative. All of these techniques are at the service of telling the story through music as powerfully as possible. In musical theatre, it is essential for a song to have a "motor," and in *Funny Girl*, Styne uses a particular rhythm (dotted quarter note, dotted quarter note, quarter note in 4/4 time) to great propulsive effect. Examples of this include "Who is the pip with pizzazz?" in "I'm the Greatest Star,"



or the accompaniment to "Don't Rain On My Parade." Merrill's lyrics contain great emotional depth in the ballads, and great humour in the up-tempos, bringing Fanny Brice's comic persona to life in song. And Merrill has a great sense of the vernacular in his lyrics: in "Don't Rain On My Parade," the "LA-ter/the-A-ter" rhyme ("Let's give 'em hell, Brice! We'll cry a little later. Well, Brice, that's life in the theater!") is irresistible.

Funny Girl possesses one of the all-time great overtures. When we did our first run-through in the rehearsal hall, it was a joy to conduct this overture, as well as the entire show. I hope my joy is infectious and converts you all to *Funny Girl* as I was converted over 50 years ago.

Music Director, Paul Sportelli, is generously supported by David and Amy Fulton.

Director's Note

by Eda Holmes

I saw *Funny Girl* on television as a child. The depiction of a life in the theatre inspired me to find my own way onto the stage. I was struck by the fierce independence that Fanny Brice embodied. She grew up on the Lower East Side of New York City - a place defined by the impoverished immigrant population who lived there. She hated school and was often in trouble for truancy or shoplifting. When she wanted to go to Coney Island, she would put a bunch of pebbles in a handkerchief and get on the trolley. Then dropping the pebbles out the window, she would cry, pretending she had lost her tram fare. Invariably some adult would console her and give her money. It was the beginning of her acting career. In 1925, at the height of her fame, Fanny Brice wrote an article for *The Saturday Evening Post* about her early experience as a performer:

"One must accept oneself... I learned this truth shortly after my first appearance on the stage. That first appearance was unpremeditated. I was trapped in a lie I had told to get into Frank Keeney's Theatre, in Fulton Street, Brooklyn, to see an amateur-night performance, and was pushed before my audience without the hint of a warning."

That idea of "one must accept oneself" is so powerful and it sits at the centre of the story of *Funny Girl*. This musical is a memory play, with Fanny coming into the theatre to prepare for a show on the night that her husband Nick is getting out of jail. Looking in the mirror and saying her famous line "Hello, gorgeous!" as she waits for him to arrive creates a rupture in time, where her life as it is and her life as it started swirl around her like a living scrapbook. For Fanny, people make the world and she lives her life on stage. Her humble beginnings are in stark contrast to her massive ambition.



This piece is inspired by a flawed but progressive version of America. A world where a smart, talented, utterly unique and ambitious woman can become a cultural icon. A world where a woman can pursue all her dreams, and even when they don't all work out, she is not victimized by the world. A world where men who commit fraud go to jail and, even though they pay for their crimes, they do not drag down the women in their lives with them.

This is a work of fiction, but it is haunted by the immense talent and agency of the woman herself. It is an invitation to take a new look at the beginning of the 20th century and at how a talented courageous woman can navigate the world on her own terms.



Matt Aflano as
Eddie Ryan.

Life In The The-A-ter

by Lois Kivest

Recent Broadway seasons included three award-winning bio-musicals with scores drawn from the "jukeboxes" of their female stars: Carole King, Cher and Tina Turner. In 1964, at the end of the "Golden Age" of Broadway, a bio-musical predecessor premiered honouring legendary performer Fanny Brice. *Funny Girl*, set circa 1910 to 1924, centres on Brice's career in the *Ziegfeld Follies* (with some youthful flashbacks) and her tumultuous relationship with professional gambler Nick Arnstein.

Fania Borach (1891-1951), the daughter of Jewish immigrants, was born on New York's Lower East Side. Inspired by success in local amateur talent contests, she left school while in her early teens, determined to pursue a career in show business. The first stop was vaudeville. Borach's character Baby Snooks debuted there and would remain a career mainstay spanning four decades. Next came burlesque - the satirical side in which parody and music prevailed, not the later risqué one. In 1908, Borach adopted the stage name Fanny Brice, with a family friend's surname removing opportunities for unfortunate nicknames such as "Bore-Act." Ethnic humour was widely seen and respected at this time. Unable to speak Yiddish, this adept mimic became known as the "clown with the Yiddish accent." *The New York Times* praised young Brice as a "burlesque comic of the rarest vintage," noting her special accomplishment in a then male-dominated realm.

While in burlesque, Brice's unique characterizations caught the attention of Florenz Ziegfeld, producer of annual Broadway revues noted for their opulent musical numbers and high artistic standards. Brice debuted in the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1910*. Her brilliant versatility was displayed in the *Follies of 1921* in her moving rendition of "My Man," a sentimental torch song that reflected her relationship with Arnstein, and became her signature piece. Brice's three marriages ended in divorce. Following a first marriage while in her teens, she wed Arnstein and later, producer-lyricist Billy Rose. Brice and Arnstein were the parents of daughter Frances and son William.

Frances' husband, film producer Ray Stark, initiated the musical that would become *Funny Girl*. Stark planned for many years to produce a musical film about Brice's life and career. At the request of his wife, he agreed to soften the characters of her parents for a semi-biographical approach. In the 1960s, Stark invited the well-regarded Isobel Lennart to write the screenplay. As work on Lennart's screenplay began however, Stark's recent success as producer of stage-to-screen adaptations prompted a move to that process for the Brice film; the story would be developed first as a stage musical. For an ally on the project, Stark linked with esteemed stage producer David Merrick. For the first time, screenwriter Lennart was now the book writer of a musical.

Merrick invited the collaborators from his recent "backstage" musical hit *Gypsy* to join the new project's creative team. In a fitting connection, composer Jule Styne and his Society Orchestra had accompanied Brice's act in 1932 at Chicago's "225" Club. Lyricist Stephen Sondheim declined the invitation as he was seeking opportunities to write both music and lyrics, and believed that Mary Martin, currently favoured to portray Fanny, was not well cast. Director Jerome Robbins' list of other potential actresses for the role of Fanny included Anne Bancroft, Chita Rivera, Eydie Gormé (with husband Steve Lawrence as Nick), and newcomer Barbra "Streisman" (as he mistakenly spelled her name).

When Martin departed the project, Robbins invited Bancroft to consider playing Fanny. Although the score was not yet written, Styne was concerned that Bancroft might not be able to sing the role. Like Robbins, however, Styne had another potential Fanny in mind. He had seen the recent Merrick-produced musical *I Can Get*



Al Hirschfeld illustration of Barbra Streisand (with a young Fanny Brice) in *Funny Girl* (1964)
 © The Al Hirschfeld Foundation, www.AlHirschfeldFoundation.org.

It for You Wholesale in which twenty-year-old Barbra Streisand made an impressive Broadway debut in the supporting role of Miss Marmelstein.

Styne and lyricist Bob Merrill had hoped to collaborate at some point, and realized that the new musical provided a perfect opportunity. As a team, they immediately created a body of songs, most of which remained in the final score. Styne wanted the score not to include recognizable Brice material in order to deter comparison for any actress playing Fanny. Instead, the “flavours” of the original songs were used to create new ones; “The Music That Makes Me Dance,” for example, was inspired by “My Man.”

When Bancroft withdrew from the project, the time was right to summon Streisand. She soon auditioned and was cast as Fanny in the musical that was now, courtesy of Merrick, titled *Funny Girl*.

Rehearsals began, along with delays caused by the A-list creative team’s “revolving door.” Robbins departed in frustration over the progress of the musical



Fanny Brice as Baby Snooks. Photo © Bridgeman Images.

book. For one month, Bob Fosse became *Funny Girl's* director. He made many impressive contributions in this brief span, but resigned, claiming distrust of Stark. Merrick, noting the need for a director with a "complete understanding of production," recommended Garson Kanin. Merrick then exited, leaving Stark as the sole producer.

An early directorial idea of Kanin's was the replacement of the song "People." He believed Fanny's philosophizing to be too early in her relationship with Nick. Merrill had just attended Streisand's recording session of the song as a single, and requested that "People" remain in the show for at least a few performances. He predicted (accurately) that it would "bring down the house."

Rehearsals continued in preparation for the first tryout performances in Boston. Although the three-hour running time was "over-length," critics praised the performance numbers featuring Fanny. Further work to augment Nick's character was carried out in both book and score. When the tryout moved on to Philadelphia, intense reworking continued. Stark, however, convinced of Streisand's potential as a film star, began looking ahead to a screen adaptation of *Funny Girl*. He acquiesced to Streisand's

preference and rehired Robbins as "production supervisor." Kanin became director in name only, with Robbins essentially at the helm again.

An extended preview period began on Broadway while Robbins continued melding his directorial choices with those of Fosse and Kanin. *Funny Girl* opened at the Winter Garden Theatre on March 26, 1964, heroically bearing no battle scars of the gruelling development journey. The favourable *New York Times* review declared, "It's the authentic aura of show business arising out of Brice's luminous career that lights up *Funny Girl*. Who says the past cannot be recaptured?" *Funny Girl* ran on Broadway for over three years with 1,348 performances.

Courtesy of television, Brice's legacy entered the popular culture of a new generation. In the series *Glee* (2009), teenage character Rachel Berry, played by Lea Michele, declared her determination to portray Fanny in *Funny Girl*, and did so in a (fictional) Broadway production in the fifth season of the hit series. The first actual Broadway revival of *Funny Girl* was in 2022. Beanie Feldstein starred as Fanny originally, and life imitated art when Michele assumed the role to great acclaim later in the Broadway run - six decades after the original premiere.

In *Funny Girl*, a youthful Fanny sings, "I'm the greatest star! I am by far, but no one knows it!"

Thankfully, we do know it.

Lois Kivesto, Ph.D. teaches musical theatre history courses at McMaster University Continuing Education. She is a long-serving programme essayist for the Shaw Festival, most recently for Lerner and Loewe's Brigadoon and Irving Berlin's White Christmas.



Above: Sara Farb as Fanny with the Ensemble. Below: Matt Alfano as Eddie and Patty Jamieson as Mrs Brice.





Clockwise from above: Janelle Cooper as Mrs Strakosh, Alana Bridgewater as Mrs Meeker, Patty Jamieson as Mrs Brice and Sharry Flett as Mrs O'Malley. The Ensemble in *Funny Girl*. Sara Farb as Fanny and Qasim Khan as Nick.





Production History

After a tumultuous rehearsal period and tryouts in both Boston and Philadelphia, *Funny Girl* opened at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York on March 26, 1964, to particularly enthusiastic reviews for the young nightclub and recording artist Barbra Streisand, who had only one Broadway credit to her name (a Tony-nominated supporting turn as Miss Marmelstein in *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*). Having released the song "People" as a single the previous January, audiences were already familiar with both Streisand and the song, and the role of Fanny Brice proved to be the catalyst for her extraordinary climb to the highest echelons of stardom. The production ran 1,348 performances and received eight Tony Award nominations, but had the misfortune of competing with *Hello, Dolly!* starring Carol Channing, who was named Best Actress in a Musical. (In 1970, Streisand was awarded a Special Tony as "Star of the Decade.") When she left the New York cast after almost two years to appear in the London premiere at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Vancouver-born comedienne Mimi Hines stepped into the role and played it for another 18 months before opening a production at The Riviera Casino in Las Vegas. A national tour starring Marilyn Michaels - although top billing went to the legendary Lillian Roth as Mrs Brice - went out on the road at the end of 1965, including stops at Toronto's O'Keefe Centre (now Meridian Hall) and Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and productions starring Australian musical theatre stalwart Jill Perryman, Carol Lawrence, Shari Lewis, Edie Adams and Barbara Cook all appeared before the premiere of William Wyler's film adaptation on September 18, 1968, which went on to become the highest-grossing film of the year and to receive eight



Gabi Epstein as Fanny Brice and John Ulyatt as Nick Arnstein in *Funny Girl* (Segal Centre for the Performing Arts, Montreal, 2015). Photo by Andrée Lanthier.

Academy Award nominations, winning one for Barbra Streisand, who tied with Katharine Hepburn in *The Lion in Winter*. With successful revivals over the years headlining such diverse leading ladies as Juliet Prowse, Laurie Beechman, Debbie Gibson, Leslie Kritzer, Vicki Lewis, Ana Gasteyer and Pia Zadora, a major New York return seemed to be perpetually in discussion, and one helmed by Bartlett Sher starring Lauren Ambrose and Bobby Cannavale was announced in 2012 but subsequently cancelled. It took the tiny Menier Chocolate Factory in London's Southwark borough to bring the show back to Broadway: Michael Mayer's production starring Sheridan Smith opened at the 180-seat venue on December 2, 2015 and subsequently transferred to the West End's Savoy Theatre, and it was this production that eventually opened April 24, 2022 at the August Wilson Theatre in New York with Beanie Feldstein - and, subsequently, Julie Benko and Lea Michele - as Fanny Brice. Canadian productions have offered Gabi Epstein at the Segal Centre for the Performing Arts in Montreal and Cailin Stadnyk at Vancouver's Arts Club Theatre. This production marks *Funny Girl*'s Shaw Festival debut.



Above: Barbra Streisand as Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* (Prince of Wales Theatre, London, 1966). Photo © Zoë Dominic. Below: Sheridan Smith as Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* (Menier Chocolate Factory Theatre, London, 2015). Photo by Marc Brenner.



The Authors

Jule Styne (1905-1994) was born in London, England, and moved with his family to Chicago at the age of 8. An early piano prodigy, his skill at the keyboard led to appearances with symphony orchestras before he had turned 10. After training at Chicago Musical College, he spent time playing in bands and writing his own songs. With lyricist Sammy Cahn, Styne received an Academy Award for 1954's "Three Coins in the Fountain". His Broadway career began in 1947 when he and Cahn composed the score for *High Button Shoes* and for years after that, Broadway was rarely without a Jule Styne show, including *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, *Bells Are Ringing*, *Gypsy*, *Hallelujah, Baby!* and *Sugar*. Over six decades as one of Broadway's most iconic songwriters, Styne's brassy and optimistic melodies became a part of musical theatre history. In 1959, on the occasion of his 25th year in show business, a tribute was read into the Congressional Record in Washington DC: "The lives of Americans throughout our land as well as the lives of people throughout the corners of the world have been enriched by the artistry and genius of Jule Styne."

Illustration © AI Hirschfeld Foundation, www.AIHirschfeldFoundation.org.



Jule Styne

Bob Merrill (1921-1998) was raised in Philadelphia and dreamed of a career in show business, entering talent shows as a boy. After serving in World War II, he moved to Hollywood and was enlisted to write songs, including his hits "If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd've Baked a Cake", "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" and "Mambo Italiano". His Broadway credits as composer and lyricist included *New Girl in Town* (1957), an adaptation of Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie*, which was nominated for a Best Musical Tony and won for its two stars Gwen Verdon and Thelma Ritter. He followed this with another musical treatment of a Eugene O'Neill play, *Take Me Along*, which received the most nominations of any show that season, but took home just one award for star Jackie Gleason. In the 1960s came *Carnival!* and *Funny Girl* and then the troubled *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1966) with Mary Tyler Moore and Richard Chamberlain and *Prettybelle* (1971), with Angela Lansbury. By the mid-1970s, Bob Merrill's output had slowed and his later years were marred by ill health. He died on February 17, 1998 at the age of 76.



Bob Merrill

Isobel Lennart (1915-1971) was born in Brooklyn, New York, and after a childhood scarred by polio, a youthful flirtation with the American Communist Party, and the loss of an early mailroom job at MGM's New York offices when she reportedly tried to form a union, Lennart headed west and rose from secretary to script girl to contract writer at Twentieth Century-Fox and MGM. Her credits included screenplays for *Anchors Aweigh* (1945), *East Side, West Side* (1949), *Love Me or Leave Me* (1955, for which she received her first Academy Award nomination) and *The Sundowners* (1960, for which she received her second). Lennart's script for a biographical film based on Fanny Brice's memoirs was paused when the project morphed into a Broadway musical, but she was kept on as book writer, and *Funny Girl* went on to be one of the last iconic musicals of Broadway's Golden Age. Her screenplay finally saw the light of day when the film version was released in 1968 and became the highest-grossing picture of the year. What should have been a stepping stone to greater success sadly turned out to be Lennart's final work after she was killed in a car accident in Southern California on January 25, 1971 at the age of 55.



Isobel Lennart

Biographies

Please scan
here for full
biographical
information.



Eda Holmes

Director

SHAW 2026: Director for *Funny Girl*. Born in Beaumont, Texas, my first time in the theatre was at the age of four – a movie of the Royal Ballet doing *Sleeping Beauty*. My favourite part was the Puss'n Boots *pas de deux*. I was inspired to become a director 26 years later, near the end of my ballet career when I saw Robert Lepage's *The Dragons' Trilogy* in London. I learned the most about directing here at The Shaw from Neil Munro and Jackie Maxwell. My production of *Arcadia* in 2013 is still one of the highlights for me – even when I heard a couple in the audience say, "What were they thinking?!" as they left at intermission.



Paul Sportelli

Musical Director

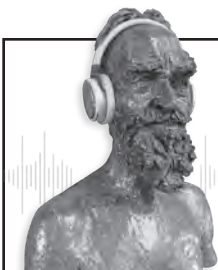
SHAW 2026: Music Director for *Funny Girl*, *Cinderella*, Music Supervisor for *Amadeus*; 28th season. Mom starred in community theatre and my parents took me to rehearsals when I was quite young. Other parents brought their kids too; but while the other kids were in the parking lot playing, I was inside watching rehearsal, mesmerized. I caught the theatre bug early. Thanks to Dad for all those years of driving me to piano lessons. Shaw productions of *Tristan* and *Maria Severa* – two musicals I co-wrote – have been two of many highlights at Shaw. I'm thankful for many wonderful teachers in my life, and I'm happy to mentor up-and-coming music directors at The Shaw.



Parker Esse

Choreographer

SHAW 2026: Choreographer for *Funny Girl*; 6th season. It is an absolute pleasure to be returning to the Shaw Festival. Being inside the rehearsal studio crafting the choreography surrounded by such dedicated artists is incredibly inspiring. It is not lost on me how grateful I am to work in my chosen profession infused with a positive, fun, and collaborative environment. Originally from Houston, TX, I grew up performing in theatre from the age of five and followed my dreams to New York City. I made my Broadway debut in *Fosse*, dancing with legends Ann Reinking, Bebe Neuwirth, and Ben Vereen. It was meeting and working with my mentor, Baayork Lee, that opened the creative door and taught me I had the skills to become a choreographer. I have been fortunate to choreograph and tell stories for the past two decades. Watching the performers I share space with exceed their own expectations, see success, and dance into their excellence, is the ultimate gift.



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Shaw Podcast

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James Lavoie

SHAW 2026: Set & Costume Designer for *Funny Girl*. The first memory I have of going to the theatre was in the early '90s. I had begged my mom to pull me out of school and take me to a matinee of a touring production of *The Phantom of the Opera* at the National Arts Centre. My little mind was blown by the drama and the spectacle of it all. Looking back now, I'm able to see how the work I do today connects back to this moment. With every show I design, I am always striving to spark even a fraction of the awe that I remember feeling that afternoon, sitting next to my mother in the theatre.



Sonoyo Nishikawa

Lighting Designer

SHAW 2026: Lighting Designer for *Funny Girl*; 1st season. I was born into a family of cinema and theatre lovers in Tokyo. My journey began when a legendary Japanese actress encouraged me to explore the "magic of backstage creation" as a lighting apprentice. I was fortunate to train under pioneers who championed women's voices, leading to a life-changing fellowship in London. There, a chance encounter with Robert Lepage drew me into a world of creative "chaos." My London mentor once told me, "Sonoyo, new stars are always born from chaos," a philosophy that has guided my work over the years. To me, lighting is far more than technology: it is my paintbrush, used to find a universal soul and paint stories within the empty space of a stage. I am honoured to join the Shaw Festival, eager to embrace new creative chaos and collaborate with this esteemed company.



Corey Macfadyen

Sound Designer

SHAW 2026: Sound Designer for *Funny Girl*. I grew up in Ottawa, surrounded by music and a family of musicians. By age 10, I was already performing for live audiences. In the years that followed, I began touring across North America and England, an experience that deepened my appreciation for the magic of live performance and led me into recording, production, and sound design. At the Shaw Festival, I've worked as a Sound Designer for productions including *"Master Harold"... and the Boys* and *Anything Goes*. Early mentorship from my father, a musician and record producer, taught me the importance of capturing the right moment, whether in the studio or on stage. Now serving as Head of Audio at The Shaw, I'm inspired daily by the extraordinary artists, musicians, and crew I'm privileged to collaborate with, bringing powerful stories to life through sound.



Kaitlyn MacKinnon

Sound Designer

SHAW 2026: Sound Designer for *Funny Girl*; 9th season. I'm proud to call Huntsville, ON my hometown. I grew up on stories of my mom and mama performing in community theatre and singing in choir groups. Mama kept a magical "tickle trunk" filled with costumes, masks, and wigs - treasures she could pull out at a moment's notice to transform into a new character, often dressing up my brother and me along the way. Those early moments of imagination and play sparked a lifelong love of theatre and helped shape the artist I am today. I'm deeply grateful to be building a career in the very art form that brought my mama so much joy.



Ryan deSouza

Associate Conductor/Keyboard I

SHAW 2026: Associate Conductor for *Funny Girl*, Music Director for *Perfect Pairings*, *A Year with Frog and Toad*; 26th season. Twenty-six years in any place is a long time for an artist, and although my kids are convinced that the world was black and white when I started, I'm truly honoured to have had the chance to make great art, wonderful friends, and a beautiful family at this exceptional theatre. Growing up in Mississauga, my parents always had music emanating from every room of the house, which began my appreciation of the arts. It fostered a love of music in me and all of my siblings. Watching The Shaw evolve from Chris to Jackie and now under TC, to its finding and nurturing of new talent, and seeing how our audiences enthusiastically celebrate our productions reinforces just how lucky I am to be a part of this wonderful community. Enjoy the show!

Matt Alfano

SHAW 2026: Appearing in *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*, Movement Director for *Jeeves & Wooster* in *Perfect Nonsense*; 5th season. Growing up in the prairies, I studied dance from a very young age. I was pulled to it: the energy and expression. Early stand-out influences were Gene Kelly, Bob Fosse, and Jerome Robbins, amongst other greats. Dance is a universal language, translating into much more than just movement, as character and emotion drive the narrative. Storytelling through creative exploration informs both my technical and performative approach to the craft. I'm grateful and fortunate to continue exploring this in my life and to share it with you all here.



Damien Atkins

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *Jeeves & Wooster* in *Perfect Nonsense*; 8th season. We had family friends growing up: the Parkins. Our moms worked together, our dads got along, and my sister and I were close in age to the Parkin kids, Adam and Erin. Eventually they moved to Toronto, and when I came out to Ontario at 19, it was the Parkins that picked me up from the airport and showed me the big city. Eventually, I lived with them, when I was just getting on my feet and had nowhere to stay between contracts. They took loving care of me. The entire extended family - aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents - took me in; they became my Toronto family. Even though I haven't lived with them for years, we are all still very close. Adam passed away suddenly this winter. This season - for me - is dedicated to him, and my beautiful Toronto family.



Alana Bridgewater

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *Perfect Pairings*; 4th season. I'm delighted to be back at the Shaw Festival this season. Fresh from working abroad in Thailand, it allowed me to see how fortunate we are to have a festival like this on such a beautiful property. It's been a pleasure doing plays, musicals and concerts. So much more to come this season.



Cassandra Consiglio

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *One for the Pot*; 1st Season. I'm honoured to be making my Shaw Festival debut this season alongside such outstanding artists. Born and raised in Winnipeg, I'm proud to come from a city that has nurtured so many incredible artists, many of whom I've had the privilege of learning from and working with. I first stepped on stage at seven years old to perform my very first tap solo, and I've never looked back. While much has changed since then, the pure magic that theatre brings into my life has remained constant. I feel incredibly privileged to share stories for a living, and I thank you for keeping the beautiful escape of live theatre alive. A heartfelt thank you to da Costa Talent and Kimberley for their guidance and support. To Mom, Dad, and Antony - thank you for your endless encouragement and unwavering belief in me.



Janelle Cooper

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *A New Work in Progress*; 2nd season. Born and raised in Toronto, but my professional career began in Calgary, AB, where I met my most cherished artistic influence and mentor, the late Kathleen Foreman. She introduced me to Performance Creation and Devising, shaping my process as a storyteller and an educator, but it was her warmth and generosity as a leader that continues to inform how I show up in a room and for other artists. Two of my favourite theatrical experiences have been under the direction of The Shaw's Associate Artistic Director, the incomparable Kimberley Rampersad, in *The Amen Corner* (The Shaw) and *The Colour Purple* (Neptune/Citadel/RMTC). Next up on my dream role list is to play Fantine in *Les Misérables*. It was the very first musical I saw. I was 10. I left the Royal Alex in Toronto knowing that this is what I would do with my life.



Eddie Ryan

Florenz Ziegfeld Jr

Mrs Meeker

Swing

Mrs Strakosh



Camille Eanga-Selenge

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, One for the Pot*; 2nd season. I'm so thrilled to be back for a full season at The Shaw after a wonderful holiday introduction to this brilliant festival and its warm, welcoming audiences. Returning feels like both a gift and a privilege, and I couldn't be more grateful to continue sharing stories on this remarkable stage. Born and raised in Ottawa, ON, but a child of St. Lucian and Congolese descent, I carry my roots with me wherever I go. I will always be thankful for my family and for the people who nurtured and supported my love for this incredible, demanding, fulfilling, and deeply rewarding calling. Their belief in me made this journey possible, and their encouragement continues to light the way.

Ensemble



Sara Farb

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, The Wind in the Willows*; 1st season. When I was nine, I auditioned for my first professional show, which was a musical of *Jane Eyre*. At the time, *Sunset Boulevard* was playing in my hometown, Toronto, and my parents had brought home the Canadian cast recording after seeing it. I loved that CD, and I totally fell in love with the score. I went to the *Jane Eyre* open call audition - my first ever - armed with what could only be described as the worst choice for any child to sing at any audition ever: "With One Look," sung by the aging actress Norma Desmond, desperate to relive her Hollywood glory days. I think the sheer chutzpah of my choice got me the job. All of this is to say, I've been trying to capture that same blind confidence of my youth ever since. May we all approach life with the undying passion and delusion of a theatre-loving child.

Fanny Brice



Amariah Faulkner

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, Perfect Pairings*; 1st season. When I was seven years old, I followed a line of seven children down the stairs and into the lights of The Princess of Wales stage. That night I received a note that the youngest von Trapp should not march out to the sounds of her father's whistle with a huge smile on her face. It's been impossible to hide that smile ever since. Thanks to a series of lucky breaks, some incredibly generous mentors, and my own ol' fashioned stubbornness, I've now been given the opportunity to work alongside many of the artists who've inspired me to pursue theatre in the first place. Special thanks to Mom and Dad, Nana and Papa, and Carla, who believe in me when I forget to believe in myself.

Swing



Sharry Flett

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, The Wind in the Willows*; 34th season. What makes the difference? Family, mentors, teachers, fellow artists? Curiosity, passion, discipline, relentless faith? All of it. I thought it was going to be medicine. Teachers influenced the path to music at Montreal's McGill University. London, England brought theatre school. Canada from east to west brought an enriched performing arts career with cherished homes at Stratford and Shaw Festival. To Christopher Newton, Jackie Maxwell and Tim Carroll - thank you. Thirty-four seasons at the Shaw Festival has brought a "wonder full" ride.

Mrs O'Malley



Élodie Gillett

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, Perfect Pairings*; 16th season. When I first started seeing live theatre, I was little enough that no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't stay awake until the end of the show. Even so, I was hooked. By age 16, my life was changed when I started working on my first show: *West Side Story* at Theatre Under the Stars in Vancouver. I've had many more adventures in theatre since then, most of them here at the Shaw Festival. Highlights include *Trouble In Tahiti* and *Me and My Girl*. When I'm on stage, I enjoy believing that the next generation of artists are out there watching... hopefully all the way to the end.

Bubbles/Vera/Ensemble

Daniel Greenberg

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *Perfect Pairings*; 2nd season. Toronto is home and it's where I've spent my entire adulthood. It's also where I had my first theatre memory - my Bubbie taking me to see *Beauty & The Beast* at the Princess of Wales in the '90s. I remember feeling that something magical was happening right in front of me. Reflecting on that, I imagine that Bub would be so, so proud that the same kid she took to the theatre has made his way through life as an artist in it. I'm still chasing that first feeling of wonder - and am lucky enough to call it work.



Jeff Irving

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*; 16th season. The first time I had the "I Wanna Do This For A Living" feeling was when I was 16 years old and I saw the Canadian Tour of *2 Pianos 4 Hands* with Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt. They performed at the Globe Theatre in Regina, Saskatchewan (my hometown). They were hilarious, they were heartbreaking, they were playful, they were skillful, and they had the audience in the palm of their hand. I was struck.



Patty Jamieson

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *Perfect Pairings*; 29th season. I've had the joy of spending much of my artistic life at the Shaw Festival, where theatre comes vibrantly to life. As an actor, I'm drawn to language-rich storytelling - whether it's the wit of Shaw, the emotional depth of Chekhov, or the sparkling precision of Noël Coward. Over the years, I've had the privilege of inhabiting a wide range of characters, each one teaching me something new about courage, vulnerability, and the complexity of the human heart. The Shaw Festival has been more than a workplace; it has been a creative home and a community of passionate artists committed to excellence. I believe great theatre invites audiences to see themselves reflected onstage, sometimes with laughter, sometimes with tears. Every time I step into rehearsal or onto the stage, I'm grateful for the opportunity to investigate and share stories that connect us across generations.



Qasim Khan

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 3rd season. I grew up in Newmarket, ON. My hobbies included running a one-person box office in my bedroom and staging solo productions of *The Phantom of the Opera* in the basement. I played every role. My mom built me a big cape. I wrapped a twist tie around my ear, so it looked like a microphone. So, it was only a matter of time, really. Some time has passed since then, and more recently, you may have seen me on stages in Toronto, Stratford, and here at The Shaw. Some of my favourite roles have been in *The Inheritance*, *Hamlet*, and *The Playboy of the Western World*. I'm grateful for the support of my partner Sergio, my family, and friends, all of whom encourage that little kid playing box office to keep on playing.



Jaden Kim

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 2nd season. Born and raised in Mississauga, ON, my performing journey began in dance. Growing up with three older brothers, I followed everything they did, not knowing that once they started dance lessons I would fall in love with the art form and never look back. After once again following them to the same arts high school, I joined my first-ever musical. A few years and a Bachelor's degree later, I figured performing is maybe a sustainable enough career choice and I am so excited to be back at The Shaw for my second season!



Swing

Adolph/Ensemble

Mrs Brice

Nick Arnstein

Ensemble



Graeme Kitagawa

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 5th season. Growing up in small town Alberta, my exposure to theatre was limited. However, through competitive dance I was able to step on the stage at an early age and I never looked back. One year, I played the role of The Genie in a production number based on *Aladdin*. Getting the opportunity to sing "Friend Like Me" meant a lot to me. Of course, no one could hear me over the 15 pairs of tap shoes on stage, but I didn't care. Today, I feel very privileged to be able to perform for a living. Also, they give me a mic now, which is very much appreciated!

Paul/Ensemble



Lawrence Libor

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 2nd season. Originally from Nottingham, England, I moved to Canada eight years ago and have had the privilege of travelling and working on all sides of the country ever since. Before hopping over the pond, I had studied in Glasgow, Scotland and then worked in and around London in shows such as *American Idiot* in the West End. From an early age, theatre and music have been a discipline and passion central in my life, led mostly by a string of inspiring female educators and mentors that have propelled me forward. You may recognise me from some of my more recent appearances in *Natasha*, *Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* at Crow's Theatre or *Maggie* at the Charlottetown Festival.

Heckie/Ensemble



Allison McCaughey

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*, Assistant Choreographer for *Funny Girl*; 7th season. The arts have been my home for many years, and I find daily inspiration collaborating in a rehearsal hall with colleagues. Theatre is alive; it is exciting and allows me to live in the moment, connect with others, build community, and create memories. I am grateful to do what I love and work alongside incredible artists. Sharing our work with Shaw Festival audiences brings me great joy. I believe that the act of coming together to tell stories is a rebellious act; the more we truly see one another, the more we can bring compassion and joy to the world.

Ensemble



Madelyn Miyashita

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *One for the Pot*; 4th season. The curious combination of being in a high school production of *The Pajama Game*, seeing Bernadette Peters in concert, and ingesting a good dose of MGM movie musicals alchemized and made me become a performing artist. I was about to go to business school, but my arts teachers and family supported my passions and kept me on this path - I will always be grateful! I've experienced a medley of this country's climates having lived in Winnipeg, Kelowna (which is a lot like here, but with mountains), and Toronto. It is an honour to return to The Shaw this season and once again be surrounded by artists who inspire me.

Ensemble



Cheryl Mullings

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *Perfect Pairings*; 3rd season. I grew up in Mississauga, ON. Believe it or not, growing up, I was very shy. In elementary school, the first time I got up in front of my class to give a speech about sharks, I got a taste of what it was like to make people laugh! It was an unlikely comedic turn thanks to an idea from my mom to throw in the suspenseful two-note motif from the famous *Jaws* theme. Thanks, mom! Now, I live in NYC - which I consider a huge accomplishment! I've worked at theatres throughout Canada and the US, including several summers at The Barnstormers Theatre in New Hampshire. I'm very grateful to be home in Canada, I'm excited for another season, and I'm still pinching myself that I get to go to work every day at the Shaw Festival!

Emma

Jade Repeta

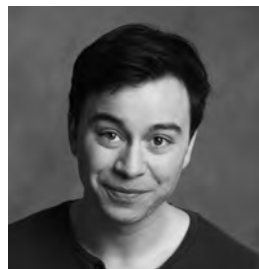
SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, One for the Pot*; 5th season. I am so proud to tell stories for a living, and I am honoured that I get to do it on the Shaw Festival stage again this year. I was born and raised in Winnipeg, just like a few other Shavians I know, and I'm very proud of that, too. Winnipeg has taught me that great art can be found everywhere if you know where to look. It has also taught me that no temperature is too cold if you have ski pants and a can-do attitude. Thank you to every person who knows and loves me. Your support means everything. And thank you to YOU, for keeping live theatre alive. There's really nothing else like it!



Polly/Ensemble

Travis Seetoo

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*; 13th season. I came to the Shaw Festival as a dancer in 2013. In 2019, an injury force me to reconsider. I explored other ways to be creative: acting, writing, and music composition. While I was grateful to discover new ways of telling stories, I missed the thrill of dancing on the Festival Stage. I am overjoyed to be back this season dancing the wonderful choreography of Parker Esse – a full-circle moment, as he choreographed the first show I performed at Shaw in 2013. There is nothing like a live orchestra playing under your feet as you jump and turn with your friends in front of a live audience. Thank you all for being here and making that magic possible.



Ensemble

Jeremiah Sparks

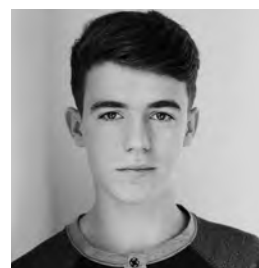
SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, Perfect Pairings*; 7th season. I come from Preston, a small community in Nova Scotia, and within Preston, my town is Cherrybrook. I began my theatre career in Halifax, Nova Scotia with Ship's Company Theatre in the early '90s, in *A World Without Shadows*, a play about Maud Lewis. It is such a joy to be back at The Shaw again. My favourite shows that I've been in here include *Ella and Louis* and *The Amen Corner*. Another gem emerged from 2017, when I was asked to create the Shaw Gospel Choir. I am delighted to bring back the Gospel Choir once again!



John/Renaldi

Éamon Stocks

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, Perfect Pairings*; 2nd season. When I was a kid, my dad had old copies of Queen performances on DVD (the band, not the person). He'd put *Queen Rock Montreal, Hungarian Rhapsody* or their set from *Live Aid* on the living room TV to watch while the family ate dinner. I had a particular fondness for Freddie Mercury. Of course, for his voice, but more so because he seemed to be having the time of his life on that stage. His joy of performing was clearly contagious, as I decided from that day on that I was going to be Freddie Mercury: whatever that meant to me. Almost 20 years later and the joy that those performances instilled in me still drives me to get up on that stage. So, cheers Dad, for digging out those DVDs and, knowingly or not, guiding me to where I needed to end up.



Swing

Mikayla Stradiotto

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl, Perfect Pairings*; 2nd Season. I grew up in British Columbia and now call Toronto home, with a big Italian family in Guelph, ON. I was lucky enough to be raised surrounded by vibrant storytellers, passionate educators, and musicians, so it's no surprise I ended up in the performance world. The arts have always been in my blood, and I feel incredibly lucky to have such a strong support system. Becoming a company member at the Shaw Festival has been my biggest professional dream, and I'm beyond thrilled to be back for my second season.



Mimsey/Ensemble



Gabriella Sundar Singh

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 8th season. My mother was a dancer growing up and has always shared her love of storytelling through dance with me and my sister. At four years old, she introduced me to Bharathanatyam, a form of drama-dance from the south of India. It is a highly expressive and epic art form and I have loved learning how to translate what I know to my work in theatre. I was 14 when I performed in my first musical, as a dancer in *Crazy for You*, and it finally all clicked: my training, my love for performing, and the spaces that I knew I felt at home in.

Mrs Nadler/Ensemble



Taurian Teelucksingh

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 5th season. My mother's humming is the first memory I have of sound and of its ability to impact me in a meaningful way. While it was off-key, it was, like her, very beautiful. Coincidentally, my first car ride as a tyke solidified my career choice; the Original Canadian Company of *Phantom of the Opera* was playing and I was enamoured. I remember crying after Colm Wilkinson finished singing "The Music of the Night" and being perplexed as to why. When my mother inquired, I could only manage to mutter something about "big feelings." "Feelings" which, upon reflection, tapped into the divinity of artistry: the need to connect, to inspire, to live fully and authentically in the moments we create. I knew right then that I wanted to perform. I've been following that instinct ever since.

Tenor Soloist/Ensemble



Jacqueline Thair

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 19th season. One of the things I love about theatre is that everyone who shows up gets to undergo something mysterious and fun together. Some of the most extraordinary teachers I've had are my co-workers and fellow ensemble members. It's been an honour to learn from them night after night on stage, and day after day in life. A few of my favourite productions that I've been a part of include *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Oh What a Lovely War*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Cabaret* and *The Lady from the Sea*.

Maude/Jenny/Ensemble



Jenny L. Wright

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*; 29th season. Thank you for coming to this special place, where stories have been shared for millennia. I am here because of Christopher Newton. In my younger days, through a variety of circumstances that led from community theatre in Montreal to a chance audition for the Shaw Festival, I met the late, great thespian. He was very kind, and I was shocked to find myself hired as an apprentice for the 1996 season. I can't begin to list all the things I learned from Chris, but his voice still rings in my mind: "Actors think in quarter seconds... don't think-speak." One favourite memory is of him directing *Peter Pan*. I flew through the air as Tinker Bell until I was grounded because I was pregnant. Newton kept me on for the rest of that 2001 season, nonetheless. The following year he babysat for me.

Emergency Rehearsal Cover/Emma



Shawn Wright

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *The Wind in the Willows*; 10th season. I have had the great pleasure of acting at the Shaw Festival under the unique and dynamic visions of the last three Artistic Directors: Tim Carroll, Jackie Maxwell and Christopher Newton. Each era was thrilling in its own particular way. Over the course of my career, I have humbly rehearsed with these great playwrights in person: Robertson Davies, Timothy Findley, Morris Panych, Daniel MacIvor, Terrence McNally, Norm Foster and Anne Rice. I have stood under the bright lights with Martha Henry, Gordon Pinsent, Joel Grey, Sutton Foster, Brent Carver, Sheila McCarthy and Audra McDonald. I love being an actor. I love being a singer. Whether onstage or in the audience, I love the magic of a warm Niagara evening, walking to the car afterward and feeling like I'm walking on air.

Tom Keeney/Ensemble

Dora Tomassi

SHAW 2026: Stage Manager for *Funny Girl*, *Perfect Pairings*; 25th season.

As a little girl growing up in Toronto, theatre companies would perform at my school. I loved it so much that I would beg my teacher to let my friends and me put on a play we had “made up” during recess. I knew from a young age that I wanted to work in the world of make-believe. Now I’m thrilled to share my work with my children. Seeing their reactions is priceless. My first show working at The Shaw was *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. *Floyd Collins* and *When the Rain Stops Falling* are still my two favourites.



Annie McWhinnie

Assistant Stage Manager

SHAW 2026: Assistant Stage Manager for *Funny Girl*, *A New Work In Progress*; 18th season. Musicals were always my favourite growing up.

Watching the talented triple threat performers create magical worlds with music and dancing. I started stage managing through a co-op program in high school and continued by studying Theatre Production at Humber College. My most influential training has come from the many talented stage managers I have worked with over the years. I have enjoyed working on many productions throughout my years at the Shaw Festival. Some of my favourites include *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Maria Severa*, *Cabaret*, *Anything Goes* and *One Man, Two Guvnors*.



Sang-Sang Lee

Assistant Stage Manager

SHAW 2026: *Funny Girl*, *Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*; 4th season. I'm born and raised in Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton) in Treaty 6 Territory and the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4: the traditional land of many Indigenous peoples, including the Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Nakota Sioux and Métis. I acknowledge those who came before us, who have stewarded this land since time immemorial so that we may have a life here. It's a reminder that the responsibility of stewardship has been passed to each of us, and that I must do more to care for this land so that future generations can enjoy the beauty and bounty that we have benefitted from. I miss those long summer days in Edmonton, where it seems like you have all the time in the world and the sun barely sets.



Lisa Russell

Production Stage Manager

SHAW 2026: Production Stage Manager, Stage Manager for *A New Work in Progress*; 2nd season. Originally from Calgary, I started my professional career thirty years ago at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton and have worked in events, dance, theatre, and musical theatre across Canada. My first trip to NOTL was to cheer on the Stratford cricket team (sorry!) at the annual Shaw/Stratford cricket match over twenty years ago and I am very happy to now be a part of the stage management team at the Shaw Festival. With the move to NOTL, I have also been able to further my pursuit of a more recent passion by setting up a home pottery studio with the dream of one day becoming a full-time potter.



Leigh McClymont Associate Production Stage Manager

SHAW 2026: Associate Production Stage Manager, Stage Manager for *Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense*; 18th season. I hail from small-town Southern Ontario, but since completing my Bachelor of Honours Drama at the University of Waterloo I have worked all over Canada. Niagara-on-the-Lake has been my home base for 17 years and I always love how early spring flowers bloom here and how it signals the return to rehearsals and loads of life at the Festival. I love delving into the intellectual work of the plays we do here or being in music and choreography rehearsals with so many incredibly talented people. It's hard not to love your workday when it's filled with singing, dancing and tons of laughter.





The Orchestra

Back row: ALEXA BELGRAVE (Substitute Keyboards) is a Toronto-based pianist, music director and educator. Select show credits include YPT's *Shrek*, Mirvish's *The Lion King* and Sheridan's *Heathers*. This is her first Shaw season. PAUL SPORTELLI (Conductor). ROB SOMERVILLE (Trombone) has performed in many musical styles over a long and varied career in the GTA and surrounding area. Rob returns for his 17th season at The Shaw. DAVID ATKINSON (Keyboard Programmer) is thrilled to be back for his 8th season. Other recent credits: music director, *Hamilton* (National Tour); associate music director, & *Juliet* (Mirvish); programming, *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* (Crow's). TIM MULLIGAN (Drums/Percussion) After touring worldwide with various musicals including *West Side Story*, *Cats*, *Evita* and most recently *Wicked*, Tim is happy to be in his 3rd season with the Shaw Festival. ANDY BALLANTYNE (Flute/Alto Saxophone) is a versatile performer with over three decades of experience in jazz and musical theatre. Recent credits include *MJ The Musical* and *Some Like It Hot*. RYAN deSOUZA (Associate Conductor/Keyboard 1). ROSS MacINTYRE (Bass) returns for his 8th season at The Shaw. He has enjoyed a diverse career performing for major Toronto theatre productions and touring with acclaimed jazz acts internationally. **Seated:** JEEWON KIM (Viola) returns for his 4th season on viola after eight years on 2nd violin. He freelances on both instruments in the GTA. CHRISTINE PASSMORE (French Horn) performs with groups including the National Ballet, Hamilton Philharmonic, the Esprit Orchestra, and the Hannaford Street Silver Band. This is her 15th season. JONAH NUNG (Keyboard 2/Assistant Conductor) is in his first season at Shaw. He is grateful to have worked with companies including Mirvish, Musical Stage, Crow's, Soulpepper, and TO Live. KATHRYN SUGDEN (Violin/Concertmaster) is a Toronto-based violinist with experience in many musical genres, from pop to the edges of contemporary experimental music and everything in between. This is her 22nd season. DAIN CARANDANG (Clarinet/Tenor Saxophone) is a woodwind doubler based in Toronto and enjoys an active freelance performance career. He is thrilled to return to Shaw for his 2nd season. Photo by Jeff MacKay.

NOT IN PHOTO

SHIRANTHA BEDDAGE (Baritone Saxophone/Bass Clarinet) is a two-time Juno-nominated band leader, composer, arranger, and jazz faculty at the University of Toronto. This is his 1st season. ERICA BESTON (Violin/Concertmaster) is a former member of the Canadian Opera Company. Shows in Toronto include *The Lion King*, *Les Misérables*, *Wicked*, *Young Frankenstein* and many more. SASHA BOYCHOUK (Bass Clarinet/Baritone Saxophone) Since arriving from Ukraine, Sasha has performed with world greats such as Michael Bublé, Gladys Knight, Tito Puente, Clark Terry, Diane Schuur, Arturo Sandoval, and many others. CAITLIN BOYLE (Viola) is playing in *Funny Girl* and *Cinderella*. Based in Hamilton, she teaches violin and viola at the Hamilton Suzuki School of Music and is acting principal violist of the Niagara Symphony Orchestra. ALEX GRANT (Cello) is in his 27th season. He freelances in Toronto and has been a member of the Blue Spruce Quartet since 2002. JASON LOGUE (Trumpet) five-time Juno-winner who has performed with Diana Krall, Dave Brubeck, and Michael Bublé. His trusty trumpet has blared through *Anything Goes*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Gypsy*, *The Book of Mormon* and *Damn Yankees*.

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Cast of *La Vie en Rose* (2025). Photo by Michael Cooper.

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Volunteer Committees

Special thanks to the 400+ volunteers who contribute more than 15,000 hours to this Festival - without their support, many of our programs and events would not be possible.

THE SHAW GUILD Sandy Henderson++, *President* · Mary Mizen++, *Past President*

The Shaw Guild is a large group of 400+ volunteers who support and promote the Shaw Festival. They are involved in many activities including greeting patrons, taking tickets, leading backstage tours, beautifying the theatre gardens, running successful fundraising events, and building awareness and engagement for The Shaw. Collectively, they donate more than 15,000 volunteer hours each year. Without their support, many of our programs and events would not be possible.

SHAW BOXING EVENING Marc St-Onge++, *Co-Chair* · Aaron Toporowski, *Co-Chair*

SHIVAREE Weston Miller, *Chair*

SHAW
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November 8 – December 23, 2026

Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella

More magic than you
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Music by Richard Rodgers
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
New book by Douglas Carter Beane
Original book by Oscar Hammerstein II

Directed and choreographed
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ALL. TOGETHER. NOW.

Campaign

There is an artist inside each of us. It is the essence of our shared humanity. But the world today has our heads down and our minds distracted. We are losing the ability to talk to each other, to look each other in the eye, to find solutions together.

This \$150 million Campaign will transform The Shaw into a buzzing campus of connection, creativity and curiosity. A Campaign that will see the creation of the Shaw Artists' Village and the Burton Centre for Lifelong Creativity and the rebuilding of our iconic Royal George Theatre. A Campaign for real human connection.



Join our Campaign for Real.Human.Connection



To learn more or to make a donation, email alltogethernow@shawfest.com or visit shawfest.com/alltogethernow

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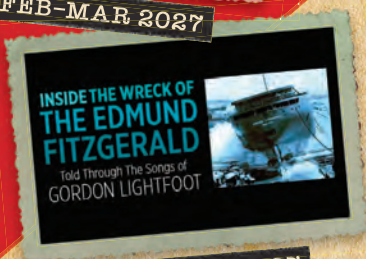
A SEASON THAT DARES
TO DO IT ALL!



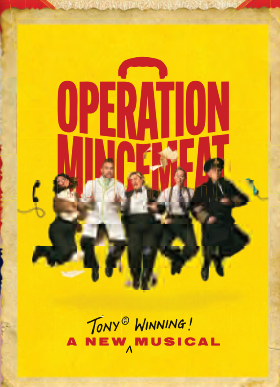
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