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Merrily We Roll Along

Stephen Sondheim

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Merrily



We



Presented by:
John Carroll University
Department of
Communication

Directed by:
Martin Friedman

Music & Lyrics by: Stephen Sondheim
Book by: George Furth

Roll



Oct. 24 & 25 - 8:00
Oct. 26 - 2:00
Oct. 30 & 31 - 8:00
Nov. 1 - 8:00
Nov. 2 - 2:00

Along



Kulas Auditorium • For Information call: 397-4428

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JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY

Department of Communications

Proudly Presents

**MERRILY WE ROLL
ALONG**

A Musical Play

Music and Lyrics by
Stephen Sondheim

Book by
George Furth

Directed by
Martin Friedman

October 24 - 26, 30 -31, and November 1 -2 , 1997
Kulas Auditorium

Produced by permission from
Music Theatre International, Inc.

Merrily We Roll Along

Production Staff

Director

*Martin Friedmann

Music Director

Leonard Di Cosimo

Set Designer

Keith Nagy

Choreographer

Gustavo Urdaneta

Costume Designer

Gilda Scapell

Lighting Designer

Jeff Lockshine

Production Stage Manager

*Catherine Farrell

Sound Designer

*Jeffrey Norris

Assistant Director

Assistant Stage Manager

Assistant to Lighting Designer

Head Electrician

Costumer

House Manager

Wigs and Hair Designer

Graphic Designer

Publicity/Marketing

Light Crew

Running Crew

Set Construction Crew

*Patipan Paktipatt

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Michael Molloy

Jill Gates

*Melissa Somrack

Jeffrey Van Curtis

John Yasenosky

Frank Miller

*Jon Mayo

Michelle Catena

Susan Filon

Meghan McBride

Erica Galel

Melissa Mensch

Julie Sankovic

Loni Garrity

Melissa Somrack

*Joseph Kilbane

Michael Molloy

Jeffrey Norris

Tyler Dorsey

*Christine Castro

JCU CO 275 Construction Class

* Denotes member of Alpha Psi Omega

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG

Musical Synopsis

**Merrily begins in 1976 and ends in 1957.
It moves BACKWARDS.**

Act I

Prologue:

Overture	Orchestra
Merrily We Roll Along	Company

scene i: Franklin Shepard's Home, Bel Air, California **1976**
(Frank, Mary: 40 years old)

That Frank	Company, Frank
Transition #1	Company

scene ii: An NBC Television Studio, New York City **1973**
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 37 years old)

Old Friends - Like It Was	Mary, Charley
Franklin Shepard, Inc.	Charley
Transition #2	Company

scene iii: Franklin Shepard's Apartment, New York City **1968**
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 31 years old)

Old Friends	Mary, Charley, Frank
Growing Up- Part 1	Frank
Growing Up- Part 2	Gussie
Transition #3	Company

scene iv: Divorce Court, New York City **1967**
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 30 years old)

Not A Day Goes By	Beth
Now You Know	Mary, Scotti, Jerome, Frank, Mary, Joe, Charley, Company

There will be a 10 minute intermission

Act II

Entr'acte

Orchestra

scene I: Alvin Theatre, New York City 1964
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 27 years old)

Opening Gussie
It's A Hit Joe, Frank, Beth, Mary, Charley
Transition #4 Company

scene II: Gussie and Joe's Apartment, New York City 1962
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 25 years old)

The Blob - Part 1 Company
The Blob - Part 2 Company, Gussie
Growing Up Gussie
The Blob - Part 3 Company
Good Thing Going Charley, Frank
The Blob - Part 4 Charley, Frank, Gussie, Company
Transition #5 Company

scene III: The Downtown Club, New York City 1960
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 23 years old)

Bobby and Jackie and Jack Charley, Beth, Frank
Not A Day Goes By Frank, Beth, Mary
Transition #6 Company

scene IV: New York City 1957-59
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 20-22 years old)

Opening Doors Charley, Frank, Mary, Joe, Evelyn
Transition #7 Company

scene V: 5:30 a.m. on and apartment roof, New York City 1957
(Frank, Mary, Charley: 20 years old)

Our Time - Part 1 Frank, Charley
Our Time - Part 2 Frank, Charley
Our Time - Part 3 Frank, Charley, Mary, Company
Finale Company

Attention: This show uses a strobe light for special effects.

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG

Cast

Franklin Shepard	Stephen Udycz
Charley Kringas	Ted Rosati
Mary Flynn	*Beth Wood
Gussie Carnegie	Nicole Cesa
Joe Josephson	Siegmund Fuchs
Beth	*Tricia Bestic
K.T.	Joanna Rosati
Jerome	*Marty Hoehler
Tyler	Brian Sinchak
Scotti	Meredith Merle
Terri	Maureen DeMers
Meg Kincaid	Cara Profughi

Cast continued next page

* Denotes member of Alpha Psi Omega

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG

Cast (con't)

Mr. Spencer/Newsman	Frank Feola
Mrs. Spencer/Newswoman	Rania Assily
Bartender	Matthew Hess
Ru	Bill Thomas
Bunker	Lindsey Leighton
Evelyn	Christina Vela
Dory	Molly Meehan
Judge/Minister	Laura Beam

ORCHESTRA

Bill Ransom	Percussion
Silvana Sokolov	Piano
Laura Porter-Fenton	Reeds
Leonard Di Cosimo	Conductor/Bass

Notes from the Director

For two years my best friend, Bruce Hennes, had pleaded with me to listen to this particular Stephen Sondheim musical he really enjoyed, *Merrily We Roll Along*. While I always loved Sondheim, especially the darkness of *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, I never really thought that I'd have the opportunity to direct one of his plays. "Too big, too complicated, too too," I'd say.

Two years passed and I was given the opportunity to direct the John Carroll University bi-annual musical production for Parents Weekend. The choice over what to direct was agonizing. I always try to choose something meaningful to students and faculty alike; and now I needed a play to appeal to one more group.

I finally had an opportunity to listen to *Merrily*. It was a revelation. Bruce was right. It was terrific; and it was filled with traditional musical-comedy songs so unlike most of Stephen Sondheim's other works. Yet it still retained the distinctiveness of his very best work. I discussed the show with my colleagues in the Communications Department, and we decided to go with *Merrily*.

The musical by Stephen Sondheim and George Furth begins in 1976 and moves backward in time to 1957. It explores the lives of three friends, Frank, Mary and Charley, and recounts the milestones that have left them successful, but bitter and estranged from one another. The play ends with the trio just starting out in their careers - young, talented and enthusiastic about conquering the world together. *Merrily* explores the meaning of dreams, friendships, aspirations and compromise. At the end of the play (actually the beginning of their friendship), we are left with an ironic sense of sadness. Fresh in our minds as we exit the theatre are the dreams of three young adults - not their later personal failures.

Merrily centers on Frank - a disillusioned but wildly successful composer/songwriter. In this production, I have made the entire musical a memory play - with a forty something, tuxedo-clad Frank consciously going back over the moments in his life that brought him to his present circumstances. It is a concept that makes Frank aware of his flaws and determined to find where he took the wrong turns that soured his relationships.

It also offers some optimism - that Frank will learn from the past and be wiser in the future.

While *Merrily* is about the deterioration of several relationships, it is at heart about the importance of friendships, and staying true to yourself and those you love.

My friends have always meant a great deal to me and I have worked hard to nurture my friendships with people from the different areas and eras of my life. I am lucky. I have several very close friends who have been unstinting in their love and support. They include Bruce - my friend for 30 years - and my wife Sandy.

This production is dedicated to Bruce Hennes, my "old friend" who's helped me stay true to my dreams.

WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

Tricia Bestic (Beth) is a junior, with a double major in Political Science and Communications. At JCU she has performed in *Prelude To A Kiss*, *The Good Woman of Setzuan*. Her favorite JCU role was as "Meg" in last year's *Crimes Of The Heart*. Some of her other roles include "Anna" in *The King and I* and "Julie Jordan" in *Carousel*.

Nicole Cesa (Gussie Carnegie) is a senior at JCU majoring in Communications with a minor in English. Ms. Cesa has participated in Choir and Show Choir for three years. Planning to going into broadcast journalism, Ms. Cesa interned this past summer at Fox 8 News. Theatre "will always be my first love, and I want to become involved in community theatre wherever I live."

Cara Profughi (Meg Kincaid) is a junior at JCU, majoring in Communications. A member of the musical fraternity Phi Theta Mu, Cara has participated in both concert and chapel choir. She also is the secretary of the Residence Hall Association. Hailing from Chardon, Ohio, Ms. Profughi lives on campus with her pets and enjoys spending time with her friends and boyfriend.

Frank Jason Feola (Mr. Spencer/Newsman), a senior English and Economics double major at JCU, is also pursuing his secondary education certificate. Mr. Feola began his acting career on the stage at the Willoughby School of Fine Arts Summer Drama Camp, performing for seven summers. On campus, Frank is President of the Residence Hall Association and Scribe of Alpha Pi Omega. He also enjoys singing for the JCU Church Choir. Mr. Feola would like to give a respectful good-bye, as this is his final musical as a student.

Lindsey Vandevier (Frankie) is a student at Roxboro Middle School in Cleveland Heights and enjoys taking all advanced classes. Ms. Vandevier is active in ballet, drama and music (playing the flute). She has been in several plays at Heights Youth Theatre including *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor*

Coat, Annie, and The King and I. Ms. Vandevier loves cats including her bob-tail kitten Zoe.

Stephen J. Udycz (Franklin Shepard) is a junior in Accounting at JCU. Mr. Udycz graduated from St. Ignatius where he played various roles in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *West Side Story*, *Bye, Bye Birdie* and *Damn Yankees*. Mr. Udycz attributes any success he enjoys to his loving parents, sister and grandparents who have helped him through everything. "I also want to thank John Carroll for giving this cast the opportunity to create this production and all the faculty for devoting so much of their free time toward the success of the show."

Joanna Rosati (K.T.) hopes to graduate before the next millennium and teach social studies at the high-school level. This is Joanna's second musical at John Carroll's stage and aside from acting, she has appeared in numerous shows with the Sound Advice Showchoir. She would like to thank her family, friends, and fiance, Shawn, for all their support. "Long live C.S.A. and Greek weddings" – where she studied the "Blob" in person.

Molly Meehan (Dory) will graduate from John Carroll next spring as a Communications Major. She played Curio in *Twelfth Night* and Lorraine in *Head of a Blue-Eyed Man*.

Maureen DeMers (Terry) is a junior at JCU where she studies Religious Studies, History and Secondary Education. Ms. DeMers has been active in theatre for six years and enjoys singing and performing as much as working backstage. She has been involved with the Weathervane Playhouse in Newark, Ohio (her hometown). "I would like to thank God for my ability and courage to sing. This show is dedicated to Maw-Maw and Paw-Paw, my musical inspirations in heaven. Among her theatre credits are *Godspell*, *My Fair Lady*, *Oliver*, *Camelot* and *Better Now Than Ever*.

Matthew J. Hess (Company Member) is a freshman Communications major at JCU. Mr. Hess acted, sang and built sets for 15 musicals/plays in high school. His most recent roles

include John the Baptist in *Godspell* and the 1st tenor in the Barbershop Quartet in *Music Man*.

Brian Sinchak (Tyler) is a freshman with a double major in Secondary Ed/English and Communications. A graduate of Boardman High School, Mr. Sinchak has played El Gallo in *The Fantastiks*, Albert Peterson in *Bye, Bye Birdie* and Jesus in *Godspell*. Mr. Sinchak is "extremely honored to be a participant in such a great show" and dedicates his "performance to my mom and three previous directors."

Marty Hoehler (Jerome) is a junior English major who wishes "the fish would stop laughing" at him. According to Mr. Hoehler, "they never will." He has performed in *Man of LaMancha*, *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Head of a Blue-Eyed Man* at JCU.

Rania Assily (Mrs. Spencer/News woman) is a freshman Communications major. Ms. Assily has performed in several high school theatre productions including *Oklahoma*, *Meet Me In St. Louis* and *Unidentified Flying High School*. She also wrote and performed in a *Saturday Night Live*-type skit created for her high school.

Siegmund F. Fuchs (Joe Josephson) is a junior Communications major who, in addition to working in theatre, spends a great deal of time on the JCU debate team. Mr. Fuchs has been involved in theatre for several years and his favorite role was "Billy Bigelow" in *Carousel*. Mr. Fuchs is thrilled to be in this production and thanks his family for their support.

Ted Rosati (Charley Kringas). Mr. Rosati is currently a junior Biology major from nearby South Euclid and attended Brush High School. His Brush credits include *Wizard of Oz* (scarecrow), *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Peter Pan*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Hello Dolly!*. More recently he was seen as Sancho Panza in JCU's production of *Man of La Mancha*. Mr. Rosati is very excited to be in *Merrily*, and hopes he will have to stay an extra year at JCU so he can be in the next musical. He loves turtles, playing soccer, watching scary B-movies, and eating chips and salsa with his friends. Thanks go to his friends; and most

especially to his family, to whom he apologizes for the profanity he has to use in this production.

Lindsey Leighton (Bunker) is a freshman Communications major. Ms. Leighton has taken 11 years of private dance lessons and is participating in JCU's Showchoir and the marching band.

Elizabeth R. Wood (Mary Flynn) is a junior Communications major from Westerville, Ohio, is making her fifth appearance in a JCU production. Ms. Wood is very pleased to be creating the character of Mary Flynn for her first stab at a principal role in a musical. Her favorite previous roles include Lenny in *Crimes of the Heart*, Maria in *Twelfth Night*, and Gymnasia in *A Funny Thing Happened on the he Way to the Forum*. Ms. Wood lives to be on the stage and would gladly accept a life-long acting gig thrown her way. Realistically, she looks forward to graduating and getting a job. Ms. Wood would like to thank her mom, Chuckie, and all of her friends for giving her the confidence to do this role and overcome all of those people who at always told her she couldn't sing. "Ha!"

Laura Beam (Judge/Minister) is a Communications major set to graduate in the spring. Other than overacting in life, Ms. Beam has "no past experience that anyone would care to know about so PAY ATTENTION while I'm on stage now – it's your last chance." When Ms. Beam is not goofing off on stage she is having fun over the air waves at **107.9 THE END**. Listen every Saturday morning (8-Noon)! "Thanks for reading about my life (and letting me plug my show). Now, have fun!"

Meredith Merle (Scotti) is a freshman Elementary Education major. Ms. Merle has performed in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* in high school, and is currently a member of JCU's Concert Choir. "I dedicate this performance to all my family and friends. Happy Birthday dad!"

Christina Vela (Evelyn) is a sophomore English major (Business/Spanish minor), from Tiffin, Ohio. Ms. Vela has

performed in *The Wiz* and *Godspell* in high school and is "very excited to be in this musical. Enjoy the show!"

Bill Thomas (Ru) is a senior Communications major whose previous roles include "Bill Sykes" in *Oliver*, "Harold Hill" in *The Music Man* and "Will Parker" in *Oklahoma*. Mr. Thomas currently is interning at Gemini Productions in Lakewood and would like to be involved in video production after graduation. Mr. Thomas recently won second place for his achievements in his advanced television production course.

WHO'S WHO - PRODUCTION STAFF

Martin Friedman (Director) has been an adjunct instructor of Theatre Arts and Communication at John Carroll since 1990. His most recent directing credits include *Crimes of the Heart*, *Prelude to a Kiss*, *The Good Times are Killing Me*, and *When You Comin' Back Red Ryder?* Dr. Friedman holds a B.S. degree in theatre education from Emerson College, And an M.A. and Ph.D. in theatre from the University of Michigan, and a certificate in non-profit management from Case Western Reserve University. He has taught theatre and communications at the University of Michigan, George Mason University, Cuyahoga Community College, University of Akron and Ursuline College. Last year Dr. Friedman was a facilitator at the Guthrie Theater's annual education conference for high school students and instructors in Minneapolis. As a communications consultant, Dr. Friedman has worked with law firms and businesses on how to improve communications with employees and with the public. Most recently, Friedman has worked on diversity training for the Anti-Defamation League, Ford Motor Company/United Auto Workers and the Cleveland city schools. Friedman and Robert T. Noll, Communications and Playwriting instructor at JCU, are currently working on a theatrical program called Collected Works to bring great literature to the schools.

Keith Nagy (Scenic Designer) is an assistant professor of communications at JCU and served as Director of Production at Cleveland Opera for the last 16 years. He also acts as a resident designer for Cleveland Opera and has designed sets

and lights for such Cleveland Opera favorites as *The Turk in Italy*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Così fan Tutte*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata* and *Carmen*. His design work has included opera, ballet, movies, live theatre and industrial shows. Some of the companies he has designed for are Seattle Opera, Opera Carolina, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Michigan Opera Theatre, Connecticut Opera and Opera de Puerto Rico. His work has also been seen locally at Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Karamu, Porthouse Theatre and Berea Summer Theatre. Other work includes being head charge artist for the movie *Paradise* and scenic artist for the movies *Double Dragon* and *The Babe*. Mr. Nagy is a member of United Scenic Artists local #829 and is the former Chairperson for the United States Institute of Theatre Technologists/Ohio Valley (U.S.I.T.T.). Mr. Nagy earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and his Master of Fine Arts degree in Production Design from Ohio University.

Jeff Lockshine (Lighting Designer) is a '92 graduate of JCU with a B.A. in Communications. He recently received his M.F.A. in Production Design and Technology at Ohio University. He has worked extensively throughout Northeast Ohio as a lighting designer, assistant lighting designer and stage manager, most recently designing *Ain't Misbehavin'* at Beck Center. Last fall, Mr. Lockshine assisted lighting designer Kirk Bookman on the National Tour of *Funny Girl*. At Ohio University Mr. Lockshine has designed productions of *Private Life of the Master Race*, *The Ruffian on the Stair*, and *The Country Wife* along with *Our Country's Good* and *Twelfth Night* (for which he won First and Second Place respectively in the Graduate Design Competition at SETC). Mr. Lockshine is currently employed as Production Manager for Creative Production Services, Inc.

Leonard Di Cosimo (Musical Director) has performed in a variety of musical settings, playing bass to back-up artists ranging from Phyllis Diller to the Fat Boys. He was an original member of the cast of *Forever Plaid* at the Allen Theatre, and he can be heard as a character voice for Sega-Genesis home computer games. Mr. Di Cosimo has appeared regionally with the Cleveland Playhouse, Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Cleveland Opera, Cain Park Theatre and Cleveland Ballet. Mr.

Di Cosimo holds degrees in composition from Cleveland State University and Carnegie-Mellon University, and his music is performed and recorded under various auspices.

Gilda Scapell (Costume Designer) currently manages the costume shop at the Cleveland Playhouse, where she recently assisted in creating costumes for *Dracula*. Other recent design works include *Miss Ever's Boys*, *Dearly Departed*, *Stepping Out*, and *The Good Times Are Killing Me*. She has also designed costumes for *Ladies of Quality* and *Pippin* at Lorain Community College. She designed the costumes for *The Good Woman of Setzuan* at John Carroll last spring. Ms. Scapell was part of the costume staff of Great Lakes Theater Festival and of Lyric Opera of Cleveland for five seasons and designed costumes for Lyric Opera last summer. She is a graduate of the University of Texas.

Gustavo E. Urdaneta (Choreographer) is an environmental engineer by trade and the president of *Bodyworks, Inc.*, a performing arts production company providing freelance directors, choreographers and producers for area theatres. Mr. Urdaneta was most recently seen in Dobama Theatre's production of *Bed and Sofa* and Porthouse Theater's production of *Man of La Mancha* as the Padre. Mr. Urdaneta most recently choreographed *The Leader of the Pack*, *The Music Man*, and *Evita*. He has also directed *A Chorus Line* and *Damn Yankees*. He has performed with Robert Goulet, Paige O'Hara, David Canary and Judy Kaye. Regionally Mr. Urdaneta has appeared at Cain Park, Music Hall, the Akron Civic Theatre and the Cleveland Playhouse.

Catherine Farrell (Production Stage Manager) is a sophomore Communications major from Westlake, Ohio. Ms. Farrell was the stage manager for *Crimes of the Heart* last semester and is glad that Martin and Keith are letting her stage manage her first musical. She also has done various backstage work for *Better Now Than Ever* and *Twelfth Night*. Ms. Farrell wants to thank her Mom and Dad, U.B., Barb, and Jeff for all their help and support with everything. "I miss you mom and dad... thank you Cara for everything, and Happy two year anniversary Jeff on October 25!"

Mike Molloy (Master Electrician) is a sophomore Political Science major. This is Mr. Molloy's fourth consecutive production at JCU and he hopes to continue this trend through the rest of college career. Molloy credits his theatre interest to his high school theatre teacher Mr. Dan Karcher. He would like to dedicate his work to his parents and all his friends that have supported him in his theatre interest.

*ALPHA PSI OMEGA

Alpha Psi Omega is the national honorary theatre fraternity. Member of Alpha Psi Omega are committed to the production of quality collegiate theatre throughout the United States. The Mu Theta chapter of Alpha Psi Omega is chartered at John Carroll University, and its members serve the local communities in their production of theatre. Induction eligibility into the fraternity is determined by participation in theatre productions.

SPECIAL THANKS

The director, cast and crew of *Merrily We Roll Along* would like to thank the following people and organizations for their support:

Dr. Jackie Schmidt
Dr. Karen Gygli
Mr. Jim Sislo
Sandra B. Livingston

Ms. Bonnie Kaminski
Cleveland Playhouse
Cleveland Opera
Bruce Hennes

Jeffrey P. Norris (Sound Designer) is a sophomore in Computer Science and Pre-Med. Mr. Norris is a very busy man. He overworks himself in the theatre, his computer science classes, his pre-med classes and his volunteer work. He has a big crush on the stage manager, and spends hours everyday trying to attract her attention, but always fails. Mr. Norris was the sound designer for *Crimes of the Heart*.

Patipan Paktipatt (Assistant Director), a student from Bangkok, Thailand, will be finishing his years at JCU in December with a double major in Communications and Political Science. He directed a Marinello Little Theatre production of *Head of a Blue-Eyed Man* last spring and acted in *Twelfth Night* and *Good Woman of Setzuan*. He hopes to get a job that pays above poverty level for a few years and eventually go to graduate school. He wants to thank Karen, Keith, Nancy, Martin and many others who have given him the opportunity to fulfill his theatrical goals here at JCU.

Jill Gates (Costumer) earned her B.S. degree in costume design from The Ohio State University and designed extensively for the dance department there. Ms. Gates currently works with Cleveland Opera's touring company. She resides in University Heights.

Brian Bossick (Assistant Stage Manager) is a Psychology major enjoying his sophomore year at JCU. Mr. Bossick's most recent roles include Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* and Barnette Lloyd in *Crimes of the Heart* at JCU and Hysterium in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. Bossick hopes that everyone enjoys the show.

Melissa Somrack (House Manager) is a senior Communications major who was pulled into the magic of theatre by the genius of Jim Henson. She has lived and breathed numerous shows here at John Carroll and is very much indebted to all who have given her the opportunity and encouragement to imagine and create. Ms. Somrack recently directed a one-act play at the Marinello Little Theatre.

The Production History of *Merrily We Roll Along* by Patipan Paktipatt

In the 1930's, theatre legends George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart wrote *Merrily We Roll Along*, a play about friendship and the corruption of dreams. Fifty years later the play was recreated as a musical by two leaders of the modern American theatre, Stephen Sondheim and Harold Prince.

Prince's wife Judy had suggested her husband direct a musical about young people and their dreams. Prince called Sondheim, his friend and frequent collaborator about *Merrily*. In an uncharacteristic move the songwriter agreed to the project on the spot. The two turned to George Furth to do the libretto, and asked successful conductor Paul Gemignani, with whom they worked with on *Sweeney Todd*, to be musical director.

But the original production faced a series of setbacks.

In the original production, Prince had cast young, inexperienced actors to play the characters. He was impressed with their roughness and inexperience in their craft. But audiences paying top dollar wanted to see famous veterans, not budding actors. For similar reasons, Prince's original plan to do without scenery was nixed. The idea of charging \$30 dollars per ticket for a show without scenery would not work.

Prince later said of his audiences: "It's not that they are closed minded it's simply that most people identify Broadway musicals with size and glamour."

The behind-the-scenes tumult didn't end with the scenery or the rejection of a whole set of costumes that didn't work visually. In the month before the opening the choreographer and lead actor were replaced. Moreover, the producers couldn't afford the cost of mounting out-of-town performances to refine the work before it showed up on Broadway. Instead *Merrily* played a month of previews in New York. Soon enough, there were negative reviews and reports of audience walkouts. By the time *Merrily* opened on November 16, 1981 at the Alvin Theatre, the show was damaged by word of mouth. It shut down after just 16 performances.

Merrily is about the disintegration of friendships and one ironic outcome of the troubled production was that Sondheim and Prince's partnership suffered for a time.

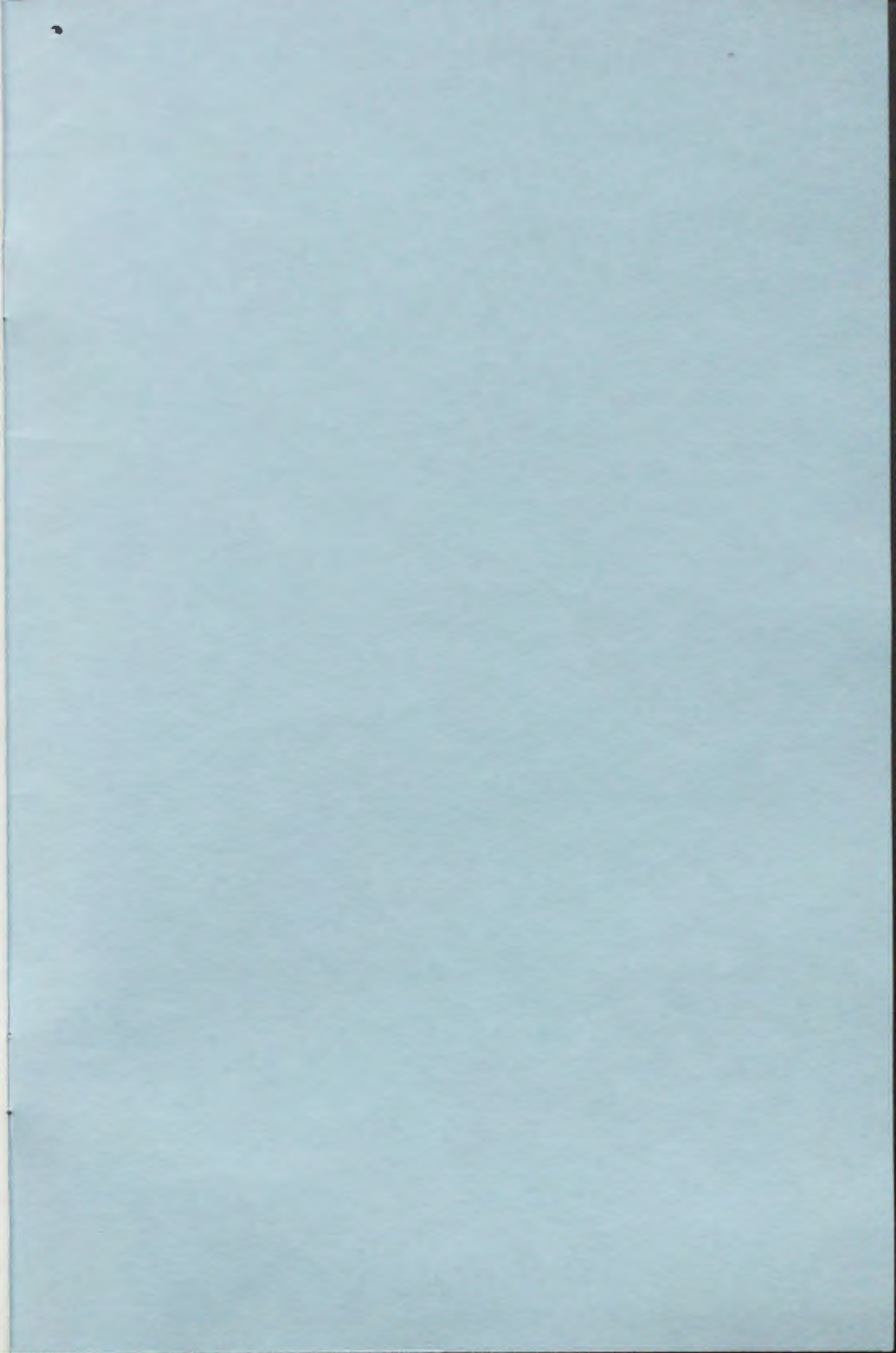
After the show closed in New York, George Furth decided to give it another chance by sending the script and a tape of the show to James Lapine, a director and playwright. But at the time, Sondheim and Lapine were about to start a new project, *Sunday in the Park with George* and they wanted to write something new together. *Merrily We Roll Along* was put on hold.

In June of 1985, a second production of *Merrily* opened at the La Jolla Playhouse in California under Lapine's direction. There were many changes from the original production. Lapine cast professional actors and used slide projectors to clarify the play's backward movement of time. Furth also made several significant revisions to the play, including the deletion of both the opening and closing graduation sequences. The song "Rich and Happy" was replaced with "That Frank". The song "Growing Up" was added and there was a lyrical change in "Now You Know." The show enjoyed a better audience response and another production of this reinterpretation took place in Seattle three years later. By that time, Sondheim thought it was time to move on.

Despite the bumpy ride, *Merrily We Roll Along* faced throughout its beginning years, audiences are still touched by the theme of this musical: the effects on friendship of betrayal, success, failure, enterprise and ambition. It truly emerged to fulfill its creators' dreams.

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**A Sam Shepard play
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PROPOSITION, THAT IT MUST BE LIVED
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