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PASSION

A Musical by Stephen Sondheim

'More than the analysis of an affection,
More than the story of a passionate affair,
What I offer is perhaps the diagnosis of an illness.'

June 6-10
2006

THE NEW WOLSEY
THEATRE IPSWICH



NOTES ON PASSION

Director Steve Taplin

Musical Staging Sally Scurrall

Musical Director Richard Healey

Designer Dave Borthwick

Lighting Design Philip Rawe

Sound Design Stuart Brindle

Wardrobe Pat Taplin

On The Book Margaret Haddock

Company Stage Manager Georgina Beard

Production Manager Pat Taplin

ASM Ruth Hayward

Stage Properties Sue Simmons

Dressers Janet Cant & Aimee Farnworth

Wigs Sophie Robinson

Publicity Photography Steve & Denis Taplin

Front of House Photographs Mike Kwasniak

Publicity Design Steve Taplin

Set Construction Dave Borthwick, assisted by
Georgina Beard, Ian Quickfall, Martin Leigh

Stage Crew Ian Quickfall, Dave Borthwick,
Shaun Whymark, Ruth Hayward,

Lorena Cencd, Matt Meyrick

LX Rigging Crew Maurice Gifford, Philip Rawe

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

Book by James Lapine

Based on the film 'Passione D'Amore,
directed by Ettore Scola

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On top of the world - Stephen Sondheim

(Stephen Sondheim celebrated his 75th birthday in 2004, Mark Shenton assessed the great American composer's legacy and asked why his musicals have always had such international appeal.)

No Broadway composer of the second half of the 20th century has been more influential than Stephen Sondheim. What's more, the man celebrated his 75th birthday on Tuesday (March 22) and is still very much with us. In October, I interviewed him live on the stage of a packed Olivier Theatre in a National Theatre platform performance and when I asked him how he thought we should mark this anniversary, he replied: "Passage of silence? I don't know. Wish me luck!"

Actually, the sound of silence is the last thing you want when it comes to Sondheim, either in person or in his incredible legacy of remarkable music. Family friend Oscar Hammerstein II took the teenage Stephen under his wing. And like that veteran lyricist, who helped shape the musical of the first half of the last century with *Show Boat*, in collaboration with Jerome Kern, in 1927 and then, in the forties, with *Oklahoma!*, *South Pacific* and *Carousel*, with Richard Rodgers, by tackling serious subjects and integrating words, music and dance to move the plots forward, so Sondheim has carried the musical conductor's baton immeasurably forward too.

In fact there are those who say he has carried it so far forward that it is difficult to know where else for the form to go now. Jeremy Sams, a Sondheim friend, fan and director of the London production of *Passion*, told me: "*I venerate him as a human being and as an artist. The only thing I have against him is that he's covered every exit and nailed it up and it's very hard for everyone else. He is to musicals as Wagner is to opera and the history of musicals will never be the same again until he's written out of it and that will take a century.*" When I quoted this back to Sondheim at the National, and asked him about the burden of this legacy, he was both flattered and optimistic but sounded a note of caution. "*I don't see myself from a bird's eye viewpoint. It's very complimentary but the good news about what's happening to musicals is that there is much more talent out there, both in New York and in London. People have really inventive ideas about how to use the stage, how to use music, how to incorporate pop music into a musical theatre tradition, ways of involving an audience that are unconventional.*

"But," he added, "*there's no place to put them on in London and no money to put them on in New York.*"

So the talent is all wrapped up with nowhere to go. The crisis in the UK is epitomised by the closure last December of the Bridewell, the laboratory theatre space that specialised in musicals and held the distinction of having offered the UK's only world premiere of a Sondheim musical when it presented *Saturday Night* in 1997, a show that he wrote when he was 23 years old but had never previously been professionally staged.

The money failure, meanwhile, is shown by the fact that even Sondheim, with his lifelong devotion to the theatrical stage, saw *Bounce* - his most recent musical - flounder and fall in 2003 before it even reached Broadway.

It was the fact that Sondheim was starting to find it tricky to get his new work put on that led him Off-Broadway in the eighties, where *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods* and *Assassins* were all first developed. "*I loved working there,*" he said, "*because there's nothing riding on it except the love of doing it, and that's of course why any sane writer writes - for the love of it - otherwise it's a fool's game.*"

His old work, however, continues to resonate in constant revivals both in New York and London. There have recently been new productions of *Assassins* and *Pacific Overtures* on Broadway, while London has seen stagings of *Sweeney Todd* - at the Royal Opera House and in the West End - and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* at the National in the last year. While the initial reaction to *Sweeney Todd* when it first arrived here at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane from Broadway in 1980 was surprisingly hostile and it closed after just a four-month run, it has long since been embraced in the spirit with which it was written. "*I meant it as my love letter to London, because I love London,*" Sondheim told me at the National, where a 1993 production by Declan Donnellan had re-established the show's local appeal. "*I don't know what happened to British taste over the period of time, because the show wasn't changed at all.*"

But though musicals like *Company* inhabit a quintessentially Manhattan milieu and both *Assassins* and *Bounce* express a very American musical voice, Sondheim's geographical as well as emotional compass is far more wide-ranging, stretching from ancient Rome with *Forum*, 19th century France for *Sunday in the Park With George* to Sweden with *A Little Night Music* and Japan with *Pacific Overtures*. He is a truly international artist, and he speaks to us all.

• Mark Shenton is theatre critic for the *Sunday Express* and co-founded the Stephen Sondheim Society. He is also the London correspondent to *The Sondheim Review*



Giorgio

I have had two great loves, two affairs differently experienced, but equally fated and formidable. It was with them - and because of them - that my youth came to a close.

I write these pages with no other motive than to interrogate my memories once more, so that I need not ever do so again. I erect this monument on the ashes of my past, like the gravestone of a creature who is adored, but lost.

Acknowledgements

Mike & Zena Steward

David Henshall

Peter Lockyer

EADT & Evening Star

BBC Radio Suffolk

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Gallery Players at The New Wolsey



'Days of Hope' 2003
(photo Denis Taplin)



'Merrily We Roll Along' - 2004
(photo Mike Kwasniak)

'She Loves Me' - 2005
(photo James Fletcher)



"Michael and Rita Morton are pleased to offer sponsorship towards this production of "Passion". Our sponsorship is made in memory of Michael's mother, Muriel Morton, who died on 4th July 2005 aged 92. Muriel enjoyed local theatre, especially Gallery Players' productions, her granddaughter Lindsey Barker being an active member. We wish Gallery Players every success with this and future productions."

Iginio Ugo Tarchetti and the Novel behind *Passion*

Tarchetti wrote the novel he entitled '*Fosca*' as it was being serialised in a Milanese periodical during 1869, the year of his death at the age of twenty-nine. While he was evoking the psychological torments of Giorgio's obsessive love, he was himself suffering the feverish delirium precipitated by his fatal diseases: he had contracted tuberculosis and typhus. The author died before the serialisation ended, but also before he could compose the crucial chapter in which Giorgio keeps his final tryst with the ailing Fosca. This was completed by a friend and sometime roommate, the novelist Salvatore Farina, and it now forms an irreplaceable part of the Italian text. In his last few months, Tarchetti was not just writing about a romantic preoccupation with illness; he was simultaneously living it out. And the narrative unfolds with a desperate urgency that attests to the peculiar circumstances of its composition, suggesting that the author's version of that unfinished chapter might have been much more daring than his friend's.

The premises of '*Fosca*' are in fact profoundly autobiographical. Presented as Giorgio's "memoir" of a fateful relationship that occurred five years before, the novel is based on incidents in Tarchetti's life when he too served as an officer in the Italian army. In 1864, he ended a tempestuous, year-long involvement with a woman in Varese and was granted an extended sick leave in Milan. While a guest at a friend's apartment, he met a neighbour called Clara in much the same way that Giorgio meets her namesake in the novel. Tarchetti mistakenly knocked on Clara's door in search of his friend; when he turned to leave, she caught the hem of his coat as she closed the door. Thus began an intense, adulterous affair that lasted more than seven months and provided several of the most striking plot details. Giorgio and Clara's excursions in the countryside around Milan, where they spent long afternoons in a shed near a secluded garden; their comical drenching in the water meadows because of their inattentiveness to everything but their love; the white kitten that Clara brings Giorgio in her muff: all this and more was drawn from Tarchetti's own encounter.

In November he was recalled from his leave and transferred to Parma, where he met Angiolina (or Carolina, according to some biographers) the cousin of his commanding officer. The model for Fosca, she suffered from epilepsy, which had dreadfully transformed her appearance. Despite her



debilitating illness, despite the indecorum of carrying on a clandestine relationship with the relative of a fellow officer, Tarchetti quickly developed an agonising fixation on her, and she responded with utter abandonment. "I suffer the torments of hell," he wrote to a friend. "That unhappy woman is hopelessly in love with me." Like Giorgio, Tarchetti unintentionally encouraged her affection by expressing compassion for her, but his feelings were extremely ambivalent, especially after a doctor advised him that she would die within six to eight months. "I would like to comfort her," he confessed, "but I lack the courage; I would like to adorn her last days with a wretched, fleeting happiness, but something in my nature finds her repellant."

'Fosca'

'All her life was concentrated in her eyes, which were jet black, large, veiled – eyes of a surprising beauty. One could not possibly believe that she had ever been beautiful, but it was evident that her ugliness was for the most part the effect of the illness, and that, when a girl, she was perhaps pleasant.'

Cast

(in order of appearance)



Clara Julie Roberts

Giorgio Duncan Broatch

Lieutenant Torasso Don Perry

Colonel Ricci James Hayward

Doctor Tambourri Steve Wooldridge

Sergeant Lombardi Colin Bennett

Major Rizzoli Roger Jackaman

Private Augenti Rodney Marsh

Fosca Linda Bailey

Fosca's Mother Samantha Horsfield

Fosca's Father Rodney Marsh

Count Ludovic Dean Wales

Mistress Susan Crosbie

Attendants Susan Crosbie &

Samantha Horsfield



Musicians

(Under the Direction of Richard Healey)

Piano Richard Healey

Trumpet Sarah Scott

Drums Pearl Gibson

The Action Takes Place;
In Milan

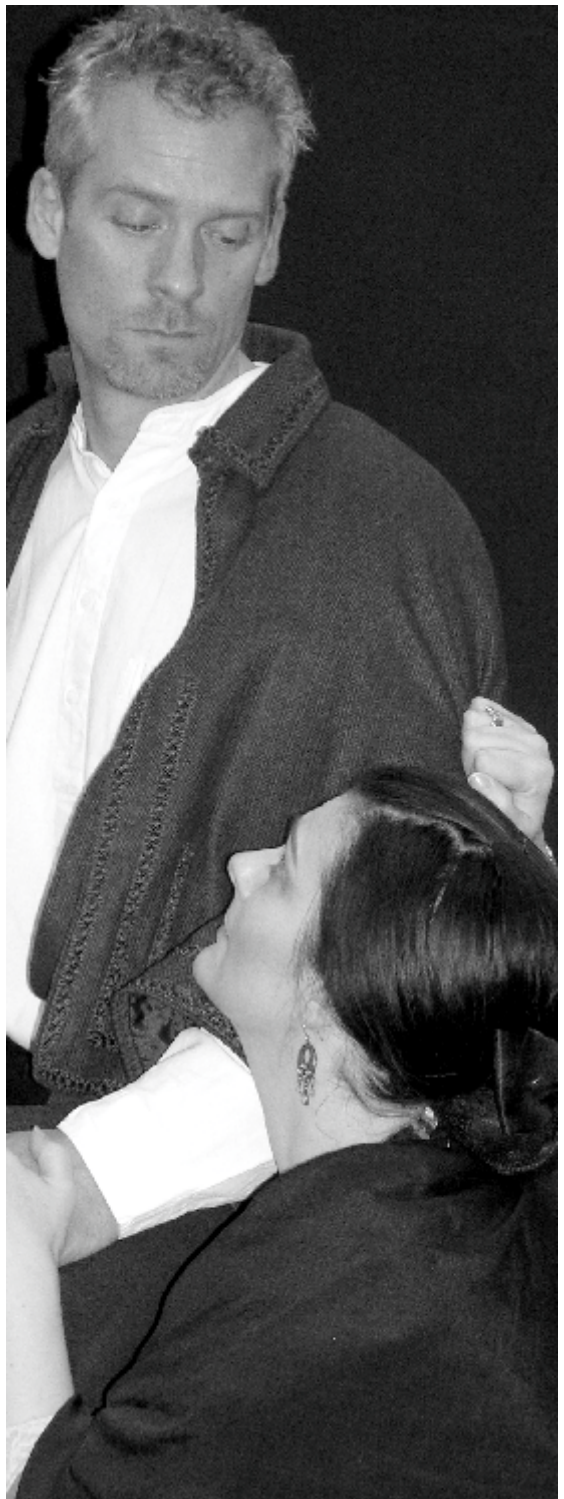
And a remote Italian military outpost.
The Time; 1863



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Scenes and Musical Numbers

Act One

Scene One Giorgio and Clara's Room
Happiness (Clara, Giorgio)

Scene Two The Colonel's Dining Room
First Letter (Giorgio, Clara)
Second Letter (Clara, Giorgio)
Third Letter (Clara, Giorgio, Soldiers)
Fourth Letter (Clara, Giorgio)
I Read (Fosca)

Transition (Giorgio, Soldiers)

Scene Three The Castle Garden
Garden Sequence (Giorgio, Clara, Fosca)

Scene Four The Dining Quarters
Transition (Soldiers)

Scene Five The Courtyard
Fifth Letter (Fosca, Giorgio, Clara)
Transition (Attendants)

Scene Six Fosca's Drawing Room / The Doctor's Office
Three Weeks (Clara, Soldiers)

Scene Seven Fosca's Bedroom
I Wish I Could Forget You (Fosca)



Act Two

Scene One The Dining Quarters
Soldiers' Gossip (Soldiers)

Flashback (Colonel, Fosca, Fosca's Mother & Father, Count Ludovic, Mistress)

Scene Two The Mountainside, (a distance from the outpost)
Sunrise Letter (Clara, Giorgio)
Is This What You Call Love? (Giorgio)

Scene Three Outside / Giorgio's Room
More Soldiers' Gossip (Soldiers)
Nightmare (Company)
Transition (Soldiers)

Scene Four A Train Compartment
Forty Days (Clara)
Loving You (Fosca)
Transition (Woman, Man)

Scene Five The Milan Train Station
Railway Sequence (Clara)

Scene Six The Courtyard at the Outpost

Scene Seven The Colonel's Dining Room
Christmas Carol (Torasso)
Farewell Letter (Clara, Giorgio)

Scene Eight Fosca's Bedroom
No One Has Ever Loved Me (Giorgio)

Scene Nine An Open Field - behind the castle steps

Scene Ten A Hospital
Finale (Giorgio, Fosca, Company)