

Gallery

a little
NIGHT
MUSIC



Gallery

Things I know
to be True
by Andrew Bovell



14-19 SEPTEMBER

THE GALLERY STUDIO THEATRE

TICKETS FROM £14

WWW.GALLERYSTUDIOTHEATRE.CO.UK

Love binds them. Truth divides them.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: *A Little Night Music* is a Sondheim show that has always been close to my heart. A tremendous success when it first premiered in 1973, with the passage of time it has become rather overlooked compared to the success of much revived productions like *Company*, *Into the Woods* and *Sweeney Todd*. But it's themes of human folly, regret and desire, all wrapped up in a gorgeous waltz-time score, are treated with a wit and wisdom that is timeless.

Gallery first performed the show in 1992, when several of our current cast were involved, including myself. It was set, as originally indicated in the script, in 1900. However, when reviving it I wanted to introduce a new note – ditch the corsets and aim for something more free in terms of movement and setting. The fin de siècle mood of 1900 seemed to have an interesting reflection in the years leading up to World War II – a sense of seismic change on the horizon.

I am thrilled with what we have achieved, and want to pay tribute to an amazing creative team, cast and crew, who have pulled together to create something very special indeed. **HELEN CLARKE**

From the moment the four of us sat around the table for a planning lunch last year I had a feeling we had every chance of creating something quite magical. The ideas started to flow with ease; waltzes, circles, and lots and lots of gauze.... creating secret rooms and furtive corners. I really hope our combined creativity and passion for this beautiful musical shine through from our stellar cast. **LESLEY BURROWS**

When I was approached by Helen to join the creative team for *A Little Night Music*, I was immediately transported back to the National Theatre production with its vast openness and lack of intimate spaces, that the characters need to help create the suffocating environment they find themselves in.

I also remember how I longed for the relationships to visually be interwoven into a claustrophobic spiral of love, longing, loneliness and loss.

The idea of creating rooms that had a sense of privacy yet transparency appealed to me, having the all-seeing and knowing Madame Armfeldt elusively present, playing marble solitaire with its circular shapes, reflecting the circle of life and watching quietly as the spiralling chaos of the lives and relationships around her crumble, making her the ultimate player in this game as she recalls how the summer night "smiles" three times: first on the young, second on fools, and third on the old.

Through tangled relationships and a thirst for rescue and hope, *A Little Night Music* reminds us all of the want and desire to love and be loved in amongst Liaisons. **GARY AVIS**



LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU Stephen Sondheim still stands today as one of the most remarkable and transformative figures in the history of musical theatre, a composer-lyricist whose work reshaped what musicals could express and how boldly they could speak. His influence rests not only on the sophistication of his music and the precision of his lyrics, but on the way he insisted that musicals could grapple with ambiguity, moral complexity, and emotional nuance without losing their sense of theatricality. He took the assumption that musicals were written with a broad brush and an easily hummable tune, and turned it on its ear. For over sixty years, Sondheim pushed the boundaries of storytelling on stage, creating works that dared to challenge its audiences, eclectic shows bristling with depth, intelligence, and, above all, humanity. He knew the pain of being alive and could craft it into a song like no other.

Sondheim was a Broadway baby, the boy from New York who found an early mentor in Oscar Hammerstein II, who taught him that songs must serve the story, and Sondheim took that principle further than anyone before him. His early successes as a lyricist—*West Side Story* and *Gypsy*—already showed a writer with an ear for character and a gift for language. But it was his later work when he took on both music and lyrics that revealed the full scope of his ambition. *Company* and *Follies*, explore adult relationships with a candour rarely seen in musicals. *Sweeney Todd* brilliantly fuses opera and horror, while *Sunday in the Park with George* examines the artist's creative process with remarkable insight. *Into the Woods* uses fairy tales to explore parental responsibility and the consequences of choice. *A Little Night Music* meanwhile, written in the middle of his most productive decade, takes long-lost love, forbidden liaisons, and the unabashed allure of passion and sex, and creates a heart-breaking yet life-affirming story set in Sweden on the longest day of the year.

Sondheim's lyrics are famously intricate and it's no coincidence that he was obsessed with puzzles – his New York apartment was awash with newspaper crosswords and antique puzzle boxes. As a boy, he thought he might become a mathematician and his work reflects the technicality and specificity of a numbers man. However technical his lyrics are though, beneath them lies a deep empathy. Sondheim understood loneliness, longing, and the fragile hope that keeps people searching for love. In fact he didn't find love in his life until he reached his sixties.

Sondheim died in 2022, leaving behind a legacy that outlives him in many ways. Musical theatre is full of writers who now cite him as a major influence. At any time, somewhere, there is a Sondheim show gracing a stage, and upcoming artists continue to reinterpret his work and audiences continue to find new meaning each time they hear his music and lyrics.

Stephen Sondheim didn't just write musicals, he elevated the form, proving that it could be as rich, complex and profound as any other art form. Art isn't easy and nor should it be.

Jon Tavener



DO I HEAR A WALTZ?

In this show you most certainly do. And it's not just in the one-two-three triple meter that Sondheim uses throughout the music, giving the entire piece its lilting, waltz-driven pulse. It can also be found in the myriad of triangular relationships. There's Fredrik, Anne and Henrik, as well as Desiree, Fredrik and Count Malcolm. There are three generations of Armfeldts and we are in the company of three separate, but deliciously intertwined families: the Armfeldts, the Egermans and the Malcolms.

This 'Rule of Three' doesn't stop there. Many of the songs have three verses. One song, *Now/Soon/Later*, has three distinct voices, three distinct tempos, and three quite incompatible desires. You don't think that the three can combine together musically until suddenly they do. Sondheim said he had always wanted to write a trio, and here he does in real style.

A Little Night Music could be said to have three main themes: Love, regret and desire.

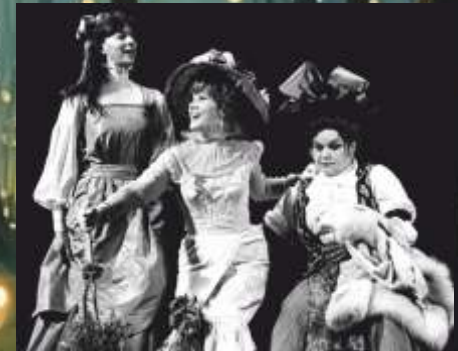
An affair needs three participants.

Madame Armfeldt predicts three smiles on a Summer night.

And finally, *A Little Night Music* won SIX Tony Awards. You can't have everything I suppose.



Jon Tavener



LOVE IS IN THE AIR: The Midsommar Festival. In Sweden, where our show is set, Midsommar is a magical and remarkable time. After months of winter darkness, the sun finally returns, stretching the days into something that feels almost ethereal. By late June, when the longest day arrives, darkness barely brushes the horizon and the sun dominates the day, rising early, and setting so late that the sky virtually refuses to darken.

It is a time of enchantment and endless possibilities, a time of celebration where anything can happen. Ancient woodland spirits play tricks on mortal man and affairs of the heart lead to ill-advised trysts and stolen kisses. A golden time spent in the company of pretty women and beautiful young men. A time for evening primrose, colour and light, and stolen moments in the woods

Villages wake early. Birch branches are cut and woven into garlands. Wildflowers - buttercups, bluebells, daisies - are gathered in armfuls, destined for wreaths that will crown heads young and old. A maypole is dressed in greenery and raised with a mix of solemn ceremony and cheerful chaos.

Families picnic, and pickled herring appears in every flavour imaginable. Sour cream, chives, crispbread, and strawberries follow. And of course, there is schnapps. Each shot is accompanied by a drinking song, sung loudly and with more enthusiasm than precision.

Love is in the air, and thoughts turn to the roads untaken, the affairs that might have been, and the agony of unrequited desire. The promise of what any moment might bring. There's a superstition that if you pick seven different wildflowers and sleep with them under your pillow, you'll dream of your future love. Even those who don't believe in such things often gather the flowers anyway. Midsommar has a way of making magic feel deliciously possible.

By the time the night finally cools, the world is tinted in soft gold. Conversations quiet, lanterns flicker, and the light - that stubborn, yet generous light - lingers just long enough to make you believe that Summer might last forever and that enchantment is real.

Jon Tavener



a little NIGHT MUSIC

SETTING
Sweden
1937



MUSICAL NUMBERS

Overture - The Servants

Act 1

Night Waltz - Company

Now - Fredrik

Later - Henrik

Soon - Anne, Henrik, Fredrik

The Glamorous Life - Fredrika, Desiree, Servants

Remember? - Servants

You Must Meet My Wife - Fredrik, Desiree

Liasons - Mdm Armfeldt

In Praise of Women - Carl Magnus

Every Day a Little Death - Charlotte, Anne

A Weekend in The Country - Company

Act 2

The Sun Won t Set - Servants

It Would Have Been Wonderful - Fredrika, Carl Magnus

Night Waltz II - Servants

Perpetual Anticipation - Petra, Malla, Osa

Send In The Clowns - Desiree

The Miller s Son - Petra

Finale - Company

Musical arrangements
by Jason Carr

MUSICIANS

(under the direction of Matt Snow)

Piano - Matt Snow

Violin - Simon Lockyear

Viola - Emily Bennett

Cello - Harriet Bennett

Reeds - Hannah Wainwright

Bassoon - Steve Lock



Matt Snow

Gallery

CAST

Madame Armfeldt Shirley Lyons
Desiree Armfeldt Helen Wheatley
Fredrika Armfeldt Rose Bennett
Fredrik Egerman Tim Holder
Anne Egerman Riley Britchfield
Henrik Egerman Josh Day
Count Carl-Magnus Ryan Cope
Countess Charlotte-Magnus Evie Snow
Frid (Mme Armfeldt's butler) Mike Kwasniak

The Quintet Of Servants
Petra (Anne's maid) Charlotte Sampson
Bertrand (Count Malcolm's butler) Martin Leigh
Usa (Mme Armfeldt's cook) Evie Capon
Sven (Mme Armfeldt's gardener & handyman) Jon Tavener
Malla (Desiree's companion/housekeeper) Steph Brown



CREATIVE TEAM

DIRECTING TEAM Helen Clarke, Lesley Burrows, Gary Avis
MUSICAL DIRECTOR Matt Snow
CHOREOGRAPHY Rebecca Darcy
MUSICAL STAGING Gary Avis

SET Dave Borthwick, Hal Darling, Gary Avis,
Lesley Burrows, Helen Clarke
LIGHTING & SOUND DESIGN James Aleksic
STAGE MANAGER Rachel Doy
LX OPERATOR Lewis Last
SFX & RADIO MIC OPERATOR James Aleksic
STAGE CREW Emily Slater, Gavin Real
PROPS MASTER/SET DRESSING Anthony Malster
PROPS Helen Clarke, Tim Holder
COSTUMES Lesley Burrows, Hal Darling, Charlotte Sampson,
Leon Harris, Gayle Marshall, Phoebe Storer, Evie Snow
HAIR & WIGS Charlotte Sampson
PUBLICITY Ben Maytham, Tim Holder
PHOTOGRAPHY Mike Kwasniak
PROGRAMME CONTENT Helen Clarke, Jon Tavener
PROGRAMME DESIGN Steve Taplin

Gallery



rehearsal photos mike kwagniak

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rehearsal photos mike kwagniak

IT'S A HIT!: *Send In The Clowns* - From Showstopper To Streisand.

Sondheim songs rarely transfer successfully to the mainstream recording world. Due mainly to the fact that his songs are so closely connected to their source material and the narrative of the show in which they come from. Sondheim himself was well aware of this fact. In his show *Merrily We Roll Along* he parodies his own inability to write a hit tune:

There's not a tune you can hum.

There's not a tune you go bum bum-bum-de-bum.

So what was different about *Send in the Clowns*? Why does it remain the one Sondheim song that people can easily identify? And, most importantly, why did it end up being covered by...wait... Krusty the Clown??

The first thing to know is that the song was written just two days before the end of rehearsals of the original production of *A Little Night Music*. It's not actually that unusual for songs to be introduced very late in the process on Broadway. Also, it was written to replace a song that was originally intended for Fredrik rather than Desiree. Sondheim was tasked with writing an 11 o'clock number for the male lead, but Hal Prince, the legendary director, thought that the scene should emotionally belong to the female lead. However, there was a problem. Glynis Johns, the original Desiree, had a very light, silvery voice, and she didn't have the breath control to sustain long phrases.

Sondheim's solution, which took him just over a day to write (most unusual for him), was to write a song with a limited range of notes and full of pauses:

Isn't it rich?

Pause...

Are we a pair?

Pause....

Me here at last on the ground....

It works so well, not just because it gives her the chance to breathe, but because it gives the words the room to resonate with the audience. Put simply, the heartbreak is in the pauses.



Glynis Johns & William Daniels

As a glimpse into Sondheim's writing process, here is an excerpt from Hugh Wheeler's original scene that was eventually replaced by *Send in the Clowns*;

FREDRIK: Desiree, there's a time to stop opening doors. It doesn't mean it's over.

Maybe it means you've found what you want.

It was the words 'opening doors' that gave Sondheim the initial inspiration for the song:

Just when I'd stopped

Opening doors.

Finally knowing the one that I wanted was yours.

So, what is the song actually about? Many people presume it's literally about circus clowns, and taken out of context perhaps that's not surprising. However, within the show, the song is very much about lost chances, rueful regret and the pain of letting go. The clowns are not circus performers. Rather, they are the love-struck fools who are not free to make the move they know they want to make. Furthermore, rather than circus clowns, they are the theatre comedy act, traditionally brought onto stage to cover up for a problem during the show. In our show, there's no need to send in any clowns, as they are the clowns and they're already here.

So how did this last-minute addition to the show find a new life as a sure-fire standard in the popular charts of the 1970's and beyond? The song's journey to mainstream popularity begins when Frank Sinatra recorded it in 1973. He instinctively knew when he heard it that it would work as a melancholic nightclub crooner song. His version, released on record in 1974, introduced the tune to a much wider audience than just the theatre, helping it circulate on radio and in popular culture.

However, the real breakthrough came with Judy Collins' 1975 recording. Known for her crystalline voice and interpretive sensitivity, Collins discovered the song after a friend urged her to listen to the *Night Music* soundtrack. Her rendition immediately struck a chord with listeners, and *Send in the Clowns* became a major chart success, winning Sondheim the Grammy Award for Song of the Year in 1976.



Collins' version made the song accessible to audiences unfamiliar with the musical's storyline. The song's themes - missed opportunities and bittersweet farewells - proved timeless and, most importantly, relatable. Collins' recording remained the definitive crossover moment that turned a Broadway ballad into a pop standard.

Following Collins' success, the song was recorded by many major artists. In 1977 alone, sixteen separate recordings of the song were officially released.

From there, the floodgates open. Send in:

Bing Crosby....Sarah Vaughn....Barbra Streisand....Cher....Shirley Bassey....Mel Torme....Jose Carerras....Tom Jones....Brotherhood Of Man....Olivia Newton-John....Elaine Paige....Dame Edna Everage....Liberace...

...and yes, in one memorable episode of *The Simpsons*....Krusty the Clown.

Each new interpretation helped set its' place in the *Great Songbook of America*, but ultimately *Send in the Clowns* became a hit because it managed to bridge the gap between the worlds of theatre and popular music.

The final word on the subject should go to Sondheim himself:

"It baffles me too. I have written a lot of easy tunes, but no-one likes to record my stuff; and it's significant that the success happened two years after the show opened. But I'm not so sure that the title song from Hello Dolly! say, would have been a hit if Louis Armstrong hadn't recorded it. Hits are flukes..." The Stage Newspaper, 1975.

Jon Tavener





a Little NIGHT MUSIC

Music and Lyrics by STEPHEN
SONDHEIM

Book by HUGH WHEELER

Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunik

Suggested by a Film by Ingmar Bergman

Originally Produced and Directed on
Broadway by Harold Prince

Presented by kind arrangement with Music Theatre
International

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alan Ayres - Co Op Juniors
IODS Theatre Company

Julian Harries and Pat Whymark - Common Ground Theatre
Company

Kelly Fletcher - Suffolk New College
Coes of Ipswich

Masquerade Costume Hire
Angela Silburn
Steve Wooldridge

Maggie Mudd and Bridget Jackaman

Norman Rutterford, Ric & Steve Taplin, Andrew Johns (help
with set installation)

Simon Hoyle & Maggie Mudd (rehearsal prompts)
Andrew Clarke
Emily Bennett

CHAPERONES

Maggie Mudd, Linda Bacon, Wendy Peakman, Michaela
Boardley, Patsy Bugg

Gallery Players started back in 1985. *Pat Taplin* decided, with a group of friends, that in order to get the kind of *Theatre* they wanted to see performed locally, they'd have to do it themselves.

Mounting lesser known, rarely produced plays and musicals has always been our forte and we'd like to think we've been doing it rather well for close to 40 years!

Although this direction brings many freedoms, to uncover hidden and forgotten gems of theatre that other groups wouldn't tackle, it can also be financially challenging for us, as we inevitably take more box office risks.

In 2021 we took another 'leap', moving into our very own premises, **The Gallery Studio Theatre**. A dream for a decade had been realised.

The opportunities the **Studio** gives us are immense, no rushed get-ins a couple of days before opening night, the ability to rehearse and build a show in the same space it will be performed in - all huge positives.

The 'flip' side, of course, is paying a 'commercial' rent and all the associated costs that go with running and maintaining the building.

Since 2019 **Gallery Players** has been a *Charity* and every penny we make goes back into the shows and the upkeep and improvement of **The Studio**.

So, we're asking for a little help from you, our dear friends and supporters.

We don't just want to 'get by with a little help as the *Beatles* sang, we want to **Thrive and Flourish!**

We were hoping you'd consider making a manageable monthly donation?

Perhaps **£2.50, £5 or £10**, nothing silly (unless you wanted to!) which over a year would build to be incredibly useful to us and most welcome. Furthermore, if you are a tax payer this amount could grow 25% at no cost to you through *Gift Aid*.

More details of the scheme and other ways to help, such as 'one off' donations, are on our website (www.galleryplayers.co.uk), scan the QR code below or pick up a leaflet in the Studio foyer .

Our current friends are:-

Di Borthwick, Julian Bradbrook & Liz Stevens, Sarah Caddick, Lisa Cheadle, Chris Dunnett, Tony Flack, Stuart Hume, Teresa & Paul Jennings, Liz Pettman, David Sutton and Brian Theodore Ralph

What a lovely bunch you are!

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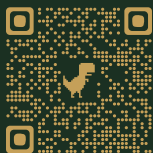
1985 Cowardy Custard, 1986 Happy as a Sandbag, 1987 Sail Away, 1988 Something's Afoot, 1989 Company, 1990 The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, 1991 The Hired Man, 1992 Snoopy - The Musical, A Little Night Music, 1993 Stepping Out, Cabaret, 1994 Assassins, The Ghost Train, Into the Woods, Hobson's Choice, 1995 Man of La Mancha, Steel Magnolias, City of Angels, Scent of Flowers, 1996 Little Shop of Horrors, The Most Happy Fella, Blue Remembered Hills, 1997 Dancing at Lughnasa, Pacific Overtures, Chicago, Hard Times, 1998 The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Sweeney Todd (The Demon Barber of Fleet Street), Shadowlands, Something's Afoot, 1999 Carnival, Trip to Bountiful, The Boys From Syracuse, Tons of Money, 2000 On Golden Pond, The Bakers Wife, Kiss of the Spider Woman, A Slice of Saturday Night, One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest, 2001 Mrs Warren's Profession, A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum, Billy, Breezblock Park, 2002 The Memory of Water, Flora The Red Menace, A Slice of Saturday Night, Radio Times, 2003 Kiss Me Like You Mean It, Days of Hope, Honk!, And A Nightingale Sang, 2004 Bouncers, Merrily We Roll Along, Talking Heads, You're A Good Man Charlie Brown, 2005 Kindertransport, She Loves Me, A Night At The Dogs, 2006 Amy's View, Passion, With Love, Colder Than Here, 2007 This Happy Breed, Grand Hotel, You Want Chilli Sauce With That & Marry Me A Little, The Sunshine Boys, 2008 Oh Kay!, Spend Spend Spend, To Kill A Mockingbird, 2009 The Long Road, Follies, Flare Path, 2010 Ordinary Days, Rent, Spring & Port Wine, 2011 My Mother Said I Never Should, Our House, Heroes, 2012 Putting it Together, Love Story, Be My Baby, 2013 A Man of No Importance, Into the Woods, The Importance of Being Earnest, 2014 Oh What a Lovely War!, Galileo, The History Boys, 2015 A Day in the Death of Joe Egg, Hairspray, A Streetcar Named Desire, 2016 Jumpers For Goalposts, The House Of Bernarda Alba, Spring Awakening, Ushers, 2017 Urinetown, Far From The Madding Crowd, 2018 Wolf Hall, Grow Up Grandad, Lucky Stiff, 2019 The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, The Lady In The Van, A New Brain, 2020 Gallery @ 35 (an online celebration), 2021 The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Macbeth, Bully Boy/Mortuary Sisters (a double bill), 2022 Celebrating Sondheim, Gutenberg - The Musical, Di & Viv & Rose, Come Back to the Five & Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean, The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole aged 13 3/4 - The Musical, Sunday in the Park with George, 2023 Daddy Long Legs, The Kitchen Sink, Xanadu, Kiss of the Spider Woman, Piaf, 2024 Playhouse Creatures, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Lovesong, The Bridges of Madison County, Parade, 2025 Fun Home, God of Carnage, The Great British Bake Off Musical, The Way Old Friends Do, 2026 Beautiful Thing, A Little Night Music. **Future Productions:-** Our 2026 season continues with - *Hadestown Teen Edition* in July , *Things I Know to be True* in September, and *Amelie - the Musical* in November. For more info. www.galleryplayers.co.uk

Gallery Players are a Charity and operate out of the Gallery Studio Theatre. We are guided by a small 'Steering Group' of (unpaid) theatre 'lovers' and aided by a melee of invaluable volunteers!

We don't receive any grants or subsidies for our day to day running and rely solely on tickets sales and kind donations to keep doing what we do, and to maintain and improve our wonderful studio theatre.

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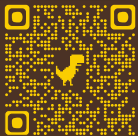
Music Daniel Messe

Lyrics Nathan Tysen & Daniel Messe

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