

PLAYBILL

A STANFORD CHAPARRAL PARODY

GLORIA ESTEFAN IN

VORCE



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now that's a story

with the Editors

SOPHISTICATED SOCIAL OBSERVATIONS FOR YOU

Now that you've found your seat in the theater, removed your top hat, and tucked away your cane, think back to the days you used to spend going to the movies. Look at you there—sitting in that air-conditioned movie theater, wiping your greasy paws on your informal t-shirt, and having to deal with that slubby slob in the seat next to you. Remember that guy? On his cellphone, taking flash photos of the movie screen, legs up on the seat in front of him. What a disgrace. And to whom?

To us, the patrons of the theater—the Broadway theater, that is. No informal t-shirts for us. No, sir. Collars and ironed pants, cufflinks and cummerbunds. Purses filled with pearls and viewing binoculars, not Snickers and Sprite.

Now that we've established ourselves as sophisticattos, does it not make sense that we have no interest in the perverse exploits of Hollywood's testosterone-fueled Blockbuster culture, but rather a mild desire to know of the activities of our peers? And merely for the very sake of our vested financial claims?

Now that that's clear, listen to this. Don't look now, but it appears **BUSTER STANTEM** is back. In case you've been living under a rock for the last few years, Stantem was arrested for burglary and imprisoned in early 2000. After six grueling years in the slammer, Stantem was finally released two weeks ago. Though his career had been considered over, Stantem is wowing critics by returning to the spotlight after all that jail. "I've seen Stantem at auditions these days [yesterday], and he is fart-in-your-face sublime. His acting has never been so raw, his enunciation so clear,"

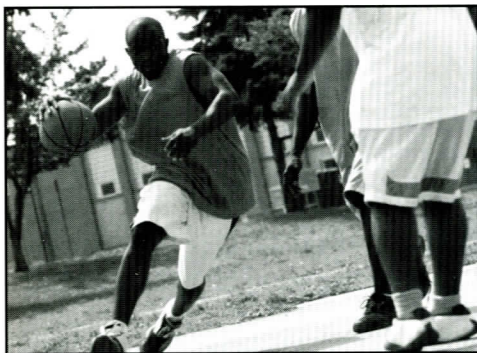
says one source.

ARTURO GONZALES, star of *Wicked*, and **PATRICK TREGO** are **GOOD FRIENDS**. Yesterday they shared cake and small talk together. They are such good friends that in a game of basketball, they can always pull off the **NO-LOOK BEHIND THE BACK PASS**. If they ask you to a pick-up game, you would do well to decline.

STEVEN SANDERS, the newest Phantom of the Opera, has checked himself into **REHAB** after tearing his ACL. Sanders hopes to strengthen his knee after a few months of intense exercise and hopefully will break his addiction to injuring himself time and again.

Looks like **ARTURO GONZALES** apparently has a **NEW BEST FRIEND** here in New York. He was seen boxing with **STEVEN SANDERS**, who broke two ribs after the much more experienced Gonzales pummeled him. Wonder what Patrick Trego has to say about this?

Now that we've proven that we are above petty rumor and innuendo, you can understand what draws us to the theater. It's more than a bucket of popcorn and the ability to discern expression on an actor's face. It's about watching people bow in order of importance, about standing up while they do so, about clapping and whooping it up. So what if you didn't understand the lyrics to the songs or know where Act I took place? Look in front of your face. There's a program there, and it's your map to one single street. One way. One two-way way. The Great White Way. The one Great White two-way Way. Broadway.



Left: Gonzales and Trego "hoop it up" on 53rd Street, because they are good friends. Right: Sanders attempts to rebuild his knee and life. These actors are our peers.

Your portfolio called. It only had one thing to say.

"Hi Ho, Silver."



Don't be fooled: the gold standard is the old standard. Which is why we once again say to you, "Hi Ho, Silver." You trust silver. You eat your finest meals off of silver flatware. Put your money where your mouth is. Call Engelhard Silver today.



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PLAYBILL

MAY 7, 2006

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a note from the director

with Andy Sol

Vorce presents a world in which gay marriage has been legalized, but gay divorce is still shunned by the public. This world may seem alien and futuristic, but it presents a valuable parable in light of today's gay decision policy. I like to think of it as more than a parable, but as a symphony. A symphony of novels all dying to speak.

Divorce is as central to the institution of marriage as the parachute is to the skydiver. In the world of *Vorce*, billions of homosexuals are pulling their ripcords, and all that comes out of their pack is intolerance. I've got news for you, audience: *Vorce* isn't the far future; it's the near future.

As many people know, gay divorce is an issue very close to me, as I expressed most recently in the November issue of *Vanity Fair*. Rights are not something you pick and choose. They're a package deal. If you have one right, you must have all rights. For instance, ask yourself how can we allow gambling, but not allow a man to gamble with his sexuality. This is a slippery slope, and we're all about to fall right off.

I know this all might sound a little preachy, but I beg you not to shoot the messenger, because the messenger is a preacher. To kill the preacher is to kill liberty--gay liberty. Divorce is a two-headed monster. One head is evil and the other is beautiful and blond. I beg you to look to divorce's more beautiful face, right into its teary blue eye, and ask for forgiveness.

That is why I decided the world must see *Vorce*. The

world's minds are prisoners in the shackles of convention. The other day I was recognized by a hoggish man named Warly while riding a ferry. He told me he found the views expressed in *Vorce* immoral. I asked him why he felt this way. "Why, because I'm a Protestant," Warly proudly proclaimed. "But, Warly, the Protestant church was founded upon divorce," I reminded

I hope or even challenge you to join.

In making a production like *Vorce*, you run into a lot of challenges along the way. We had the flu going around for like a week, and the first sound engineer was extremely allergic to the theatre. In many ways, this is a lot like life: you face hurdles periodically. One moment you're doing great, and the next thing



Andy Sol directs the "Custody" chorus number during rehearsal.

him. His damp, quivering face showed he was deeply conflicted or seasick. It was at that point I realized that there were millions of Warlys out there, all in great need of *Vorce*. It is my gift to this trembling, pale, poorly-dressed world.

I certainly couldn't have done it without the rest of the cast and crew. Or if I had, it would have seemed a lot less professional and probably not as good. I thank them for teaching me that even I can learn something. It's that sort of reward you can't buy with even several small diamonds. It has been an incredible ride, a ride

you know, your face is grotesque and swollen. I think about this, sometimes.

Vorce is about more than a message; it is also about music. So, I hope we get some songs stuck in your head. Maybe even stuck in your head for the rest of your life. I know that's certainly the case for me. That way, maybe we'll all be a little less afraid to sing along.

Thank you all for coming, and I hope you're ready to get *Vorced*.

The Director

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ON BRAWLDWAY?



As summer approaches, Broadway audiences find their blood boiling with dramatic fury. By Theo Gallagher

On May 5, violence again rocked Broadway as a brawl erupted during the closing moments of the first act of a performance of *Con-Quest* at the Horatio Theater. Eight were wounded, with one, actor Hernán Pavano, the lead of *Con-Quest*, sustaining critical injuries. Twelve ushers were killed.

"It was surreal," theatergoer Ellen Sharpless said. "They were doing the big number before the curtain when all the sudden [Pavano] gets this fierce look on his face. The next thing we know, he's flying into the audience throwing haymakers at the entire third row. I wasn't going to take that sitting down, so I spiked him with my heel."

Added Sharpless: "Eventually the whole crowd wanted a piece of him."

The cast and crew of *Con-Quest* followed Pavano's lead and soon it was tooth and nail, grip vs. groundling in hand-to-hand combat. Immediately, the theater's ushers intervened in an attempt to restore order. No eyewitnesses have spoken as to any brutality towards these aislemen, but, as is typical with these donnybrooks, all twelve of them lay beaten, lacerated and dead by the time police arrived

at the grisly scene.

The Horatio incident is the latest in a rash of theater violence. Some 70 scuffles have broken out at Broadway plays so far in 2006. Some analysts look at *Con-Quest's* gritty depiction of prison life as a catalyst for this outburst. Indeed, the song "A Riot? (Let's Try It!)" during which the fighting began is a call to arms for the inmates of *Con-Quest*. But other incidents have cropped up with no seeming pattern—shows ranging from *Waiting for Godot* to *Cookin'!* have seen conflicts.

Peter Sundin, a sociologist and drama enthusiast, wondered if Broadway will ever be the same. "Honestly, it's just a different clientele now. People go to the theater looking for a fight. But maybe that's what society needs now. What with TV, movies and the Internet entertaining people easier and better, maybe this is the 21st Century playhouse."

The evidence would seem to bear out Sundin's conclusion. 36 audience members, in addition to facing assault charges, were cited for carrying illegal butterfly knives. But Sharpless, who admits to carrying such a knife, recalls seeing actors wielding brass

knuckles and blackjacks.

"They were armed to the teeth," she said. "Only they were able to tell the police that they were props. [Expletive]. There's no brass knuckles in prison."

Old guard theatergoers have attended uneasily ever since the fight wave began at a January 10 production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. As Blanche DuBois was carried off to the sanitarium, an unknown audience member shouted, "That's too sad!" and began booing. Other patrons joined him in bringing the Bronx cheer downtown, and a flustered Courtney O'Hare, portraying Blanche, forcefully shushed the audience.

"Once you break the fourth wall like that, you can't expect the crowd and stage to remain separate," said Roger Keteyian, NYPD captain of the newly formed Broadway precinct. "We've taken to calling it 'the shush heard round the world.'"

The audience, acknowledged, empowered, and enraged, stampeded the stage, destroying the sets within moments and tearing seven ushers limb from limb. No arrests were made, as the then-unready NYPD was unable to respond before the crowd dispersed.

Between the trouble at *Streetcar* and the latest brouhaha at *Con-Quest*, *Guys & Dolls* devolved into a literal battle of the

sexes, a staging of *West Side Story* became a battleground for a turf war between Albanian Boys Incorporated and the Latin Kings, and the lobby of the Old Magnanimous theater was whipped into a state of frenzy by a jarringly organized group of homeless men with hungry, feral dogs.

Keteyian believes that things will get worse before they get better. "Violence always begets more violence," he said. "I talked to a little old lady last week who said she'd never go to the theater again after getting a 'Chelsea smile' while waiting for a cab. And you know who's going to fill her seat? Another hard-eyed teen, spoiling for a fight."

Still, business has never been better.

"We're still sold out every night," Richard Quartermain, manager of the Dashiell Hammett Theater. "Maybe they're not as well-dressed, but they pay the price of admission and keep my staff on their toes."

Police forces have been ineffective in combating the unrest. Many allege that officers cannot control the fights.

"It's a tall order," he said. "These kids are faster and stronger than we are. I admit that we have not done the best job of quelling the violence, but I want to put to rest the rumor that my men are getting beaten like ushers in these theaters."



Above: *The Fall of the House of Usher*. This one was beaten to death with a lady's purse.

Gloria-nigans!

Playbill goes behind the scenes of the hit Broadway drama *Vorce*, only to find a whole new drama backstage.



The biggest little prankster on Broadway, Gloria Estefan packs a lot of punk into her 5'2 frame. Here, Estefan ties the knot with costar Vince Patel, right before he is to make his big entrance onstage.

by Joe Fogerty

“Cut!” screams director Andy Sol. “What the hell?!”

Everyone on stage is soaking wet with stink bomb juice.

Everyone, that is, except one Gloria Estefan, who’s standing stage left, beaming, a Powerjet 100K Giant Super Soaker in hand.

Sol struggles to scream, “Gloriaaaaaa!” as he is slowly engulfed in stink bomb essence. Estefan’s cackle resonates through the stink-laden air, and she quickly scampers to her finely furnished dressing room. Slamming the door with girlish sass, she refuses to let me in.

Welcome to Gloria’s world: *Vorce*, the show in which she stars. *Vorce* has hit Broadway with a force that has swept audiences and critics alike off their stinky feet. Battling such issues as gay divorce and war, *Vorce* is truly a play that deals with some contemporary, rather serious issues.

But for Estefan, *Vorce* is just another stop on the prank train.

“I’ve always been a fan of the greats,” shouts Estefan, through her dressing room door. “Nathan Lane, Andrew Lloyd Weber, Ann Miller...” Silence ensues, until it is broken by an emphatic “Shhhhhh! He’ll hear you!” Childish squeals escape from the keyhole, and it is clear all is not what it seems.

Within seconds, two fiery red-headed monsters emerge from their hellish den, pouncing on me with demonic fury. Their sweaty freckles reek of sneakers, and their mouths are stained with fruit punch from days ago.

.....

“Hey, hey, you okay?”

I don’t know how much time has passed.

“I see you’ve met the twins,” says Peter Dent, the man who plays Lance Ronick in the show.

“Where am I?” I sputter.

“Safe,” replies Dent.

.....

Vorce boasts an incredible supporting cast. Along with Dent, Troy Hampshire

and Vince McReadey provide a solid foundation on which Estefan can shine. Jerry Grossberg, who plays the always-lovable Sarge, reports, “Other than Andy’s extraordinary script—which really needs no comment here, part of what drew me to *Vorce* was the chance to play a father figure. The Sarge is someone who looks out for the young, the innocent,” explains Grossberg, as he wrings his shirt out in the dressing room sink, stink bomb juice pouring down the drain. “I wasn’t expecting this,” he murmurs, barely audible.

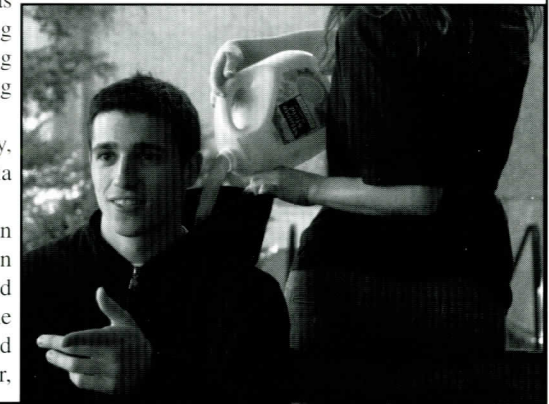
He refers, of course, to the spicy, saucy, in-your-face attitude of Gloria Estefan.

Born and raised in Cuba, Estefan spent her younger years working on various sugar plantations. Controlled by state-run organizations, life on the plantation was at best tolerable, and at worst, stinky. It was here, however,

just finished dinner at the restaurant Estefan recently purchased in Times Square, the Salsa Factory.

“Okay. On your feet!” she snaps, and with a broad swing of the hips, pushes her chair out from the table.

“But Gloria, there’s no music!” I protest. She smushes my face together with her long,



Above: Estefan pours her stink bomb juice concoction into the hood of an unsuspecting Peter Dent. Left: A classic Gloria move.



bright red fingernails.

“Shut up! We make our own music!” With two stomps of her ten inch stiletto heels, a mariachi band appears from behind the bar and strikes up “Get On Your Feet.”

Gloria lets her hips do the talking, as she swings her way to the dance floor, clients thrown out of the way as she marches through the crowd. She spins around and calls to me once more. “Come on, Jose!”

It would be suicide to resist. I push my chair out from under me politely, look around to make sure I’m not offending anyone, and walk up to my partner. She extends her arm up, pushing her hand into my face, inviting me to kiss it.

To this day, I don’t know what would have been crazier: refusing her or accepting. But you can’t change the past, and you can’t refuse Gloria Estefan.

Before I know it, I’m sweating like a banshee, and not because I’m dancing. My face is so swollen that I can’t hear what looks

that Estefan developed some of the lyrics she would go on to make famous. Employing the sap from the innards of sugar trees, Estefan constructed rudimentary lyric sheets out of leaves and dried tree syrup. Attempting to prove to herself that she was still a human being and not suffocating in the gas chamber of sugar, gulping for sweet air, Estefan would drip dry such lines as, “Air... heat...pa-pa. Get on your feet! Get up, and make it happen!”

“I really have tried to make the best out of every situation,” Estefan sasses, sucking on a jalapeno pepper. “Like, even though I was basically a child-slave, I was still Cuban, and I was still so proud.”

She spits two jalapeno seeds into my glass of water, and it is clear who is boss. We have

to be Gloria's howling shimmy laughter.

It turns out Estefan had purposely covered her hand in the Salsa Factory's hottest spice, "Sweet Gloria." By kissing her hand, I got a taste of near death, and she knew it. But while I was still gushing sweat and blowing up like a ripe tomato, I had no idea what was going on.

.....

"Hey, hey, you okay?"

I don't know how much time has passed.

"I see you've got a taste of Sweet Gloria," says Peter Dent, who plays Lance Ronick in the show.

"Where am I?" I sputter.

"Safe," replies Dent.

.....

Vorce couldn't have asked for a better theater than the The Constitutional. Built in 1926, the Constitutional boasts wide, luxurious seats and broadly-curved walls that give the theater an expansive, yet intimate atmosphere.

Sitting dead center in the middle of the Constitutional (Seat 44FF), I can almost hear its history cackling in the wings. A shiver runs down my spine, and it is clear Gloria Estefan is about to play a prank on me.

"Hello?" I offer.

Something rustles down the aisle to my right. I can't see it.

"Don't try and act like you're not there!" I yell.

Nothing.

"PETERRRRRRRRRRR!"

Peter Dent parts the Constitutional's velvet, red curtain and bolts off the stage with lightning speed. Landing on the two armrests of a seat ten rows in front of me, Dent hurdles the rows in a heroic feat of agility.

But by that time, it's too late. All of my clothes have been taken from me.

I watch in stupefied horror as Maggie and Pepper Rooter high five Gloria Estefan.

Maggie jumps on her back, Pepper plows into her stomach and is swooped into her arms, and the devilish trio scampers into the backstage area. I can see my khakis spilling out of Maggie's backpack.

Peter brings me a costume and looks away politely as I clothe.

.....

For director Andy Sol, keeping a cool head amidst Estefan's insufferable shenanigans is a definite priority for a smooth ship. Looking up from his most recent notes on Act II, he declares, "Just give her room. Just give her room and hope for the best."



Estefan pulls the backstage fire alarm for the twelfth time in two weeks.

CONSTITUTIONAL THEATRE

Presents

VORCE

Book, Music and Lyrics by

Gregory Saltzman

Starring

Gloria Estefan

Also Starring

**Peter Dent Maggie and Pepper Rooter Beauregard Stevens
George Ranch Vince McReadey Jerry Grossberg and Troy Hampshire**

Scenery Designed by

Tanya Plonick

Costumes Designed by

Chase Berkheimer

Lighting Designed by

Matthew Richardson

Casting by

**Jerome Williams
Anne Czeylak**

Fight Direction by

Nate Fitzgerald

Wigs/Hair Designed by

Marise Chen

Choreography by

Austin Sirota

Direction by

Andrew Sol

Stop the violince!



Fact: In the formation of a string quartet, the viola is the limiting reagent, while the violin is in abundance.

Kids! Try a viola.

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www.anendtoviolince.com

Are you a fashion connoisseur?
Do you go to the theater a lot?
So much that you consider yourself a "Broadway Animal"?
Do you like your fashion to be made of animals?
We have animals that you can wear.

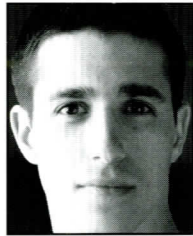
SAKS FIFTH AVENUE



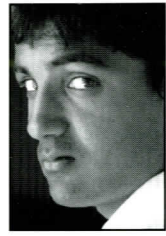
Gloria Estefan



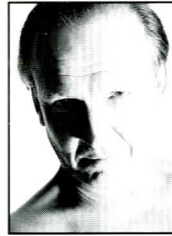
Troy Hampshire



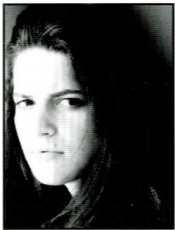
Peter Dent



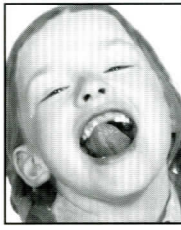
Vince Patel



Jerry Grossberg



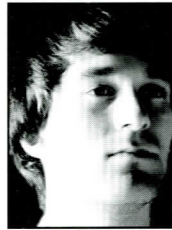
Kate Howley



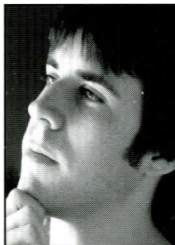
Maggie Rooter



Pepper Rooter



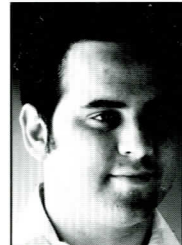
George Ranch



Beauregard Vic



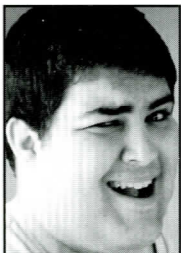
Vanessa Grant



Sam Plank



Debbie Frill



Henry Fredricks



Gladys Jacobs

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Flo Fuentes.....GLORIA ESTEFAN
 Lance Ronick PETER DENT
 Rogers Vilking.....TROY HAMPSHIRE
 Dolores JordanMAGGIE/PEPPER ROOTER
 Manny Jordan.....GEORGE RANCH
 Gordan Jordan VINCENT PATEL
 Beauregard Jordan BEAUREGARD VIC
 Native Dancer..... KATE HOWLEY
 The Dynamos..... DEBBIE FRILL, GLADYS JACOBS
 Dynamo Hensch..... GERTRUDE FELIX
 The SargeJERRY GROSSBERG
 Scholar.....HENRY ADAMS
 Enemy Commander..... ANDY WILLIAMS
 Enemy Soldiers..... NATALIE ANDREWS, HOLDEN STUBBS, TED JONES
 Gym Teacher.....BILL HINTER
 Motor-Face..... FRED YOUNG
 Jane Turnblad SARAH YOUNG
 Father Dan..... MICHAEL HALPERT
 Band Members..... JON ROSAND, JOSH LEVINE
 Little Inez JACKIE HOFFMAN
 Grown Inez..... SARAH WILLIAMS
 GuardJOEL VILTERS
 Dr. Thomas EDWARD FIELDING
 Sick Patient.....PETER CORBETT
 Radio Host..... NIC CARR
 Principal Goddard..... CHARLES CHISOLM
 Gilbert STEVE ANDERSON
 Guitar Hero..... APPLE JONES
 Denizens of Town..... ERIC ANTHONY, TODD SMITHEN
 Shasta Williams..... SHANA STEELE
 Tyrone Williams..... JOHN HILL

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"Elementary, my dear [your name here]..."



Want some mystery in your life? Why not start with dinner? At Scary Sherlock Holmes Mystery Dinner Theater, the mystery starts at midnight. The lights will go out. You will hear a blood-curdling scream. When the lights come back on, your dinner will be in front of you. But who did it?

CONSTITUTIONAL THEATER BATHROOM POLICY

IMPORTANT: Following our fire marshal's demands, The Constitutional has implemented the following Bathroom Policy, which all patrons are expected to abide by and fully respect. The Bathroom Policy prevents long lines at the restrooms during intermission, and, in the end, makes both the audience and the Constitutional's staff, plus the fire marshal, happy.

1. DO NOT ASSUME you have to "hold" yourself in your seat during the show. Everyone has to go to the bathroom, and everyone has to go to the bathroom at different times. You *have* to have the confidence to get up from your seat and physically walk to the bathroom in order to make the Bathroom Policy work.

a. It does NOT disturb the *actors* when you get up in the middle of a scene in order to leave the theater to get to the bathroom. Each individual actor is attuned to our Policy, and has undergone summer training in order to prepare themselves for these occurrences.

b. It does NOT disturb the *other patrons* when you get up during the middle of a scene in order to leave the theater to get to the bathroom. Every single member of this audience is reading the same thing you're reading right now. That means that every one of you will be aware of the fact that, if someone gets up in the middle of the scene, this someone has to go to the bathroom, and, because of our Policy, he or she is NOT being rude.

2. DO NOT ALL GET UP at once. There are designated boxes that hold the bathroom key for each theater section. These boxes are located on top of the wooden podiums that run up and down the aisles, spaced twenty feet apart. You cannot miss them.

a. When you TAKE the key out of the box, you must hit the *schoolbell* that is located next to your box. This signals to your section that you have taken the key, and that no one else from your section is allowed to go to the bathroom right now.

b. When you RETURN the key to the box, you must hit the schoolbell twice, so that everyone knows you're back.

c. Do NOT forget the order: one strike to leave, two to return. A helpful way to remember this is to think, "Gone," when you leave (one syllable), and "I'm Back," when you return (two syllables, or two hits of the schoolbell).

3. ENJOY YOURSELF. A bathroom is not something to be scared of.

I have read and understand the Bathroom Policy.



SCENES & MUSICAL NUMBERS

Act One

- Prologue:** "The Halls of Parliament" Flo Fuentes & Company
- Scene 1: Army Camp Infirmary**
"Dyin' Inside and Out" Flo Fuentes & Lance Ronick
- Scene 2: Army School**
"No Homework" Jordan Kids
- Scene 3: Battlefield**
"Blah, Blah, BLOG" The Sarge
- Scene 4: Army Camp Infirmary**
"Vorce of Nature" Flo Fuentes & Lance Ronick
"Wedding Bells of Blood" Flo Fuentes & Lance Ronick
- Scene 5: Gordan Jordan's Home**
"Custody Now" Gordan Jordan

Intermission

Act Two

- Scene 1: Battlefield**
"Vorce of Nature (Reprise)" Flo Fuentes, Lance Ronick & Company
- Scene 2: The Shop**
"Grotesque (Like Me)" Motor-Face & the Grease-O's
- Scene 3: Army School**
"Dad's Back, Mom's Remarried" Jordan Kids
- Flo and Lance's New Home**
- Scene 4:** "Good Morning" Gordan Jordan
"Ex-Husband? Ex-actly" Flo Fuentes
"What's 'Gay'?" Dolores Jordan
"Vorce of Reason" Beauregard Jordan

Church

- Scene 5:** "Our Father" Flo Fuentes & Company

Signature _____

Seat Number _____

Please Rip Out Page and Pass to Your Left



SHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Please Leave the Dialogue to the Actors



WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

GLORIA ESTEFAN (*Flo Fuentes*) dedicates her first appearance on Broadway to her mother. She is so excited to be making her debut as a strong, independent woman, because that's what she is. Along with her famously lucrative record labels, Gloria's children's book, entitled *The Magically Mysterious Adventures of Noelle the Bulldog*, was just published in October but is already receiving critical acclaims for its nuanced portrayal of dogs. Gloria is thrilled to be originating the role of Flo, as divorce is an issue very close to her heart. Love to Emilio. **All: keep your eyes open for Act II, Scene III...somebody might get pantsed!!!!

PETER DENT (*Lance Ronick*) is excited to be back at the Constitutional after many years away. Off-Broadway: *Death of a Salesman*. Broadway: *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Miserables*, *The Music Man*, *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, *The Producers*, *Annie Get Your Gun!*, and *Rent*. Love always and forever, Sally (1974-2005). Interesting working with Gloria and the Rooters. No flash photography.

VINCE McREADEY (*Gordan Jordan*) is thrilled to make the transition from television to stage, where he can finally gesture and mug free from the

constricting lens of a camera. Now he can do it for the biggest screen of all: the stage. Life off the laugh track does not provide the stability that he needs, but the applause is crisper and more satisfying. Special thanks to Deb Messing for all the late night email sessions.

TROY HAMPSHIRE (*Rogers Vilking*) was born and raised in London. Previously a senior member of the Engineering Guild, Hampshire brings a working class attitude and technician's knowledge to his new assignment. Though previously considering joining *Vorce* as a member of the orchestra, he will always remember his decision to throw down his tuba and audition as one of the most impulsive and least technical decisions of his life.

JERRY GROSSBERG (*The Sarge*) is back on the stage for the first time since his roles as Liesel in *The Sound of Music*, Jill in *Annie*, and Martha Banks in the ill-fated stage version of *Mary Poppins*. At eight, he was beginning to look "too much like the man he would grow into, and not enough like the woman he was destined to play on stage." Confused, Jerry vowed never to return to the stage, a vow he has struggled to keep until now, sixty years later. Jerry rarely dates, never marries, and always has a cigarette to spare.



WHO'S WHO IN THE CAST

MAGGIE AND PEPPER ROOTER (*Dolores Jordan*) come from a long-standing show business family, with a mother, Janine Rooter, who received acclaim as the scheming "Dolores Claiborne" in *One Life to Live*. Maggie and Pepper, who share the role of Dolores Jordan, are two of the most talented young actors in the nation, not the world. Janine Rooter, Maggie's and Pepper's mother, attributes their talent to the fact that they were raised in a single parent home. "We've all had to look out for each other," reports Mrs. Rooter. "Me most of all." The Rooters want to give a big "FUK U!" to Gloria Estefan, their *fun* mommy.

GEORGE RANCH (*Manny Jordan*) is having a really hard time in elementary school. It's been hard for him to memorize lines, read books, and put his affairs in order. The doctors call it dyslexia but George calls it NOT FUN. When not practicing for the show, George can usually be found in the bathroom, which he calls REALLY FUN.

BEAUREGARD STEVENS (*Beauregard Jordan*) is lucky to be here today,

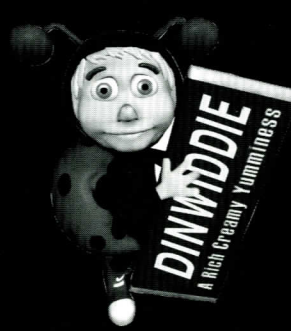
considering how difficult he was to birth. Weighing in at a whopping 9.5 pounds, he's since grown into a 75 pound actor with a lot of guts and an incredible vocal range. He recently sang the national anthem at Yankee Stadium, and was considered for the part of Jorge Posada during the game.

ANDREW SOL (*Director*) would like to apologize for his cast's behavior at the *Today Show's* sneak peek performance of *Vorce* in March. That was not the choreographed dance that they were supposed to perform, and he would never stoop so low. Broadway: *Vorce*.

GREGORY SALTZMAN (*Book, Music, and Lyrics*) was bedeviled in the writing of this play. Originally, he planned to release the play only 25 years after his death, given the personal nature of the subject matter. Then he realized that with a few songs, a title other than "Gregory Saltzman's Life: Fall 2003-Winter 2005," and female actors, the show wouldn't be as embarrassing. He had Gloria Estefan in mind for another intensely personal play, but Gloria couldn't relate to that one. An equitable compromise was reached.

YOU CAN TAKE MY LIFE, BUT
YOU CAN NEVER TAKE MY

DINWIDDIE
BRAND CANDY BAR



DINWIDDIE
A Rich Creamy Yummyness

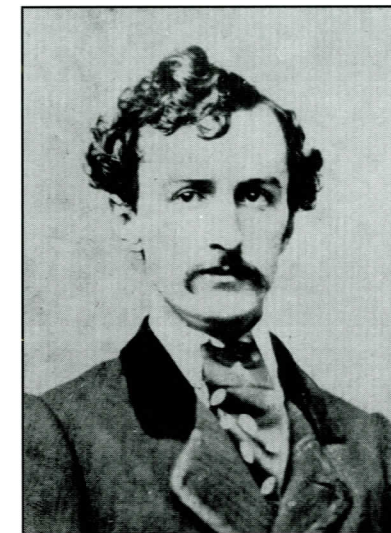
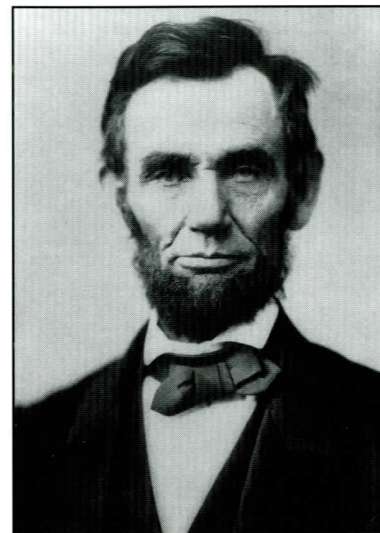
CRITICAL MOMENTS IN BROADWAY HISTORY

The Show Must Go On

Broadway theater patrons have always been amazed by a cast's concentration in the face of distraction. A Broadway actor will continue with his lines even if he is deathly ill, his microphone gives out, or the play is just not that good.

shouted "Sic semper tyrannis!" Which is Latin for, "Thus it is always with tyrants."

Everyone in the theater was shocked. Most of all, the cast and crew. Booth played the pivotal role of foppish Uncle Murray. According to the



Above: Booth and Lincoln, two of Broadway's greatest heroes.

This tradition of perseverance started during the performance of the play *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. on April 14, 1865. Halfway through Act III the character Asa Trenchard (the titular cousin), played that night by Harry Hawk, utters the play's funniest line:

"Don't know the manners of good society, eh? Well, I guess I know just enough to turn you inside and out, old gal—you sockdologizing old man-trap."

Raucous laughter followed this line, and it appeared that Hawk was destined to go down as one of theater's greatest line sayers. Fate, it seems, had other plans. John Wilkes Booth, another member of the cast, immediately upstaged Hawk by leaping out from behind the shadows and assassinating Abraham Lincoln. He chose the timing in hopes of building dramatic tension. He then catapulted from Lincoln's box to the stage, breaking his leg. As he leapt, Booth

stage directions, he was technically supposed to scream "sic semper tyrannis" and enter stage left on roller skates. Though he had instead shot the president and broken his leg, he was onstage and had delivered his line. With Lincoln quickly losing blood and the whole audience paralyzed with fear, Harry Hawk made a bold decision.

"Why Uncle Murray, get that tea cozy off of your face you knee-slapping, flim-flamming old fizzesnap!"

Hawk faithfully delivered another killer one liner, and the crowd was too much in stitches to notice or care that the President was dying. Simply because one member of the cast had forgotten his stage directions, Hawk could not simply stop the show dead in its tracks. Roller skates were quickly strapped to Booth's feet, and the show went on without a hitch despite Booth's screams of pain as he attempted to skate through the rest of the play. A Broadway tradition was born.

GEODES: AN IMAX ADVENTURE

You have seen them
from the outside.

NOW:

IMAX takes you inside the
secret lives of Nature's most
wonderous rocks.

22 Meters Wide. 16 Meters Tall.
30X Magnification.

Come see a geode the way it
was meant to be seen.

GEODES

See them again.
For the first time.

Features:

from real life to screen to stage to the screen (in German) and then back to real life

The movie, *Windtalkers*, inspired by true events, recounts the tale of Navajo soldiers during World War II. The American military used the ancient language of the Navajo to code radio transmissions during the war. The language proved impossible for German and Japanese cryptologists to crack.

The writers of the movie *Windtalkers* were so inspired by these true events that they decided to make up fake events based on what actually happened. The result was an incredibly successful film that is now finding a home on Broadway. Naturally, the writers of the movie took some liberties with the real story.

"Well, of course the Hollywood version is going to be a little more over the top than real life, but hey, that's Hollywood," explains writer Joe Tompkins. For instance, in the movie version of the real life events, the team of commandoes sent to fight in Japan is led by a beautiful, yet mysterious woman that speaks only Navajo and ultimately falls deeply in love with the character played by Nicolas Cage.

"Navajo women didn't actually fight during the war," says Tompkins. "Moreover, not all of them are beautiful."

Fresh off the heels of the movie version of *Windtalkers*, *Windtalkers: The Musical* is inspired by the hit movie that was inspired by the true events of World War II. The writers of the musical were so inspired by the movie that they decided to write a new play based on the movie inspired by the events. Don't get caught expecting a simple retread of the film, however.

"We're reinterpreting the film for a Broadway audience," says director Tim Helms. In the stage version, the entire team of commandoes are spunky, beautiful women that speak only in Navajo. All of them fall in love with Heath Ledger, a private in the platoon.

"In the real version of the film, there's only one woman, and she isn't spunky," Helms elaborates. "Also, Heath Ledger wasn't in the movie."

That's not all. With the success of the musical version of *Windtalkers*, there are plans to translate the play into German. The German version of the musical will then be made into a movie. Producer Hans Lieber is careful to point out that the new

German film version will be markedly different than the original movie version based on real life events.

"This is not a simple translation of the original film," he explains. "Rather, it is a fresh re-imagining of the translation of the musical inspired by the film based on the events."

Windtalkers: The German Translation of the Musical Based on the Movie inspired by the Events presented very interesting challenges for the German crew.

"Germans can't understand Navajo,"

explains Lieber. "That was the entire basis of the American musical. Indeed, it was the entire basis of the real events, and the movie based on the events as well. To work around this, we've had to translate the Navajo into Japanese."

In the German musical, German soldiers invading France confuse the French by sending in an all woman army that speaks only in Japanese. Heath Ledger is the last remaining Navajo President of Germany.

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"These events are based on the German musical translation, not the real events themselves. It's not going to be as over the top as a musical or a film." In the upcoming real events, Nicolas Cage is going to learn Japanese.



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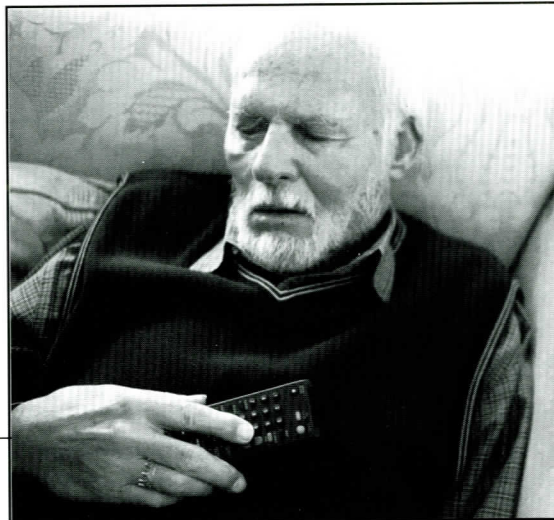


A tense moment from the film version of *Windtalkers*

A Life in the Theater

It was only a matter of time before Virgil "Pig" Higgins, Broadway's leading light in lighting, got noticed. *Playbill* throws the spotlight on the spotlight and takes you inside the life story of one of the greatest spot operators of our time.

By Arnold Botto



C.S. Lewis once wrote, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."

In theater, the sun is the lighting. And Virgil "Pig" Higgins, the greatest spotlight operator of the 20th century, may well be the savior.

"People throw around a lot of highfalutin language about what I've done," Higgins says. "But that's up to those people. I have swarthy actors and a nearsighted audience to worry about."

Higgins's modesty is as false as his aim is true. Perhaps no one man has more greatly affected how we see the theater today. As the father of the "Pig's Eye" system of spotlighting, Higgins serves as a beacon to thousands of today's beamsmen.

"Before him, there was, well, darkness," says Mike Marston, curator of the Greater Albany Broadway Museum.

Born in 1918, to a lighthouse keeper and the notable choreographer Greta Higgins-Forsberg, Higgins had a rootless childhood. "I guess you could call me a lighthouse brat," he says. Most keepers lead a solitary and contemplative life, but then again, most keepers don't marry a lady in the traveling company of *Knickerbocker Holiday*. I probably stayed at every lighthouse

on the Eastern seaboard. When papa had drunk a lot of cider and fallen asleep, I'd grab the lens and light up ships. You know how kids are, I was just screwing around. I never thought there'd be a career in it."

Fate intervened when Higgins was just 13. Young Pig had tagged along with his mother to a show in Philadelphia. Fifteen minutes before the curtain went up, and the chief lightning bug was AWOL—the crew later learned that he had blinded himself in an accident while moonlighting at an illicit playhouse and was too disgraced to return to *Knickerbocker*. Higgins's mother volunteered him and before he knew what was going on, he was in the rafters.

"I was scarer than a cityslicker in a sandstorm," Higgins recalls. "But my hands were steady, I know that. After the show, the director came up and offered me the job."

For the next decade, Pig Higgins did like those who came before and paid his dues as a journeyman, moving from theater to theater in pursuit of work. Then came Pearl Harbor.

"I wasn't going to sit around and wait to get drafted," spits Higgins. "I enlisted before the first bomb hit the ground."

In 1943, Higgins joined the Air Force, his furious blood pumping hot in his veins. He flew a then-record 236 missions as an ace tail

gunner, where he won the Congressional Medal of Honor for shooting down 79 German planes.

"The war made a man of me, that's for sure," he says. "But it's also where I had an epiphany. Lighting up Fred Astaire was no different from lighting up Fritz. I needed to aim where he was going to be. It didn't occur to me until I was shooting down planes and taking lives."

"No one had really thought to lead the target before," Marston says. "Sudden leaps or sweeping gestures by the new generations of more mobile actors would leave those old lighting guys scrambling."

By working closely with the actors and learning what they planned to do in a given scene, Higgins made history. Gone was the old "Glow 'n' Go" system of reactive spotlighting, replaced in a "Pig's Eye."

"At one point, Pig was bigger than the show," recalls actress Catherine Robinson, who worked with Higgins on *Porgy and Bess*. "I remember the old Brunetto Theater

cut away part of their curtain so the audience could watch Pig work his magic. They even wanted to rig him up with a special two-way spotlight so people could see him better, but he was too much of an old pro for that."

There were many imitators, but Higgins remained the brightest star looming over Broadway. Still, his finest hour was yet to arrive.

Higgins showed up to the Brunetto for work one evening in 1968 and noticed an uncomfortable buzz among the crew. The best boy told him that the day had come that all lightslingers feared: the theater had purchased one of the newfangled steam-powered spotlights.

"Pig would have none of it," Robinson says. "He took one look at that contraption and said, 'Before I let that that machine shine me down, I'll die with my bulb in my hand.'"

Management and the crew hastily agreed upon a contest. A chicken-coop barrier was hastily erected around the sides of the stage. One hundred white cats were gingerly placed in the enclosure. A small mark of red paint was applied to the back of one cat, a feisty Persian with an aloof air. Whoever could

track the stained cat for longer was the champion.

"For whatever reason, we were going to lose our jobs if Pig lost," curtain puller Manny Lechtenberg says. "Our union was for shit. Just the worst. The theater-goers were peeved that *Oklahoma* was not going to be performed as per usual, but most people stayed to see how this played out. Besides, you just don't pass up an opportunity to see Pig in his prime. It wasn't even a consideration back then."

For six days and six nights, man and machine kept their beams trained on the blotted beast. Here, *Playbill* itself makes a cameo in history as patrons were encouraged to hurl their copies on stage in hopes of inciting a frenzy that would bring a quicker end to the struggle.

The details of Higgins's victory are a bit crass, but must be said. Eventually, the "star" Persian was mounted by a tomcat, obscuring the target. The machine, unprepared for this contingency, malfunctioned terribly and began panning the theater, searching for the red mark that was its foothold. It found just such

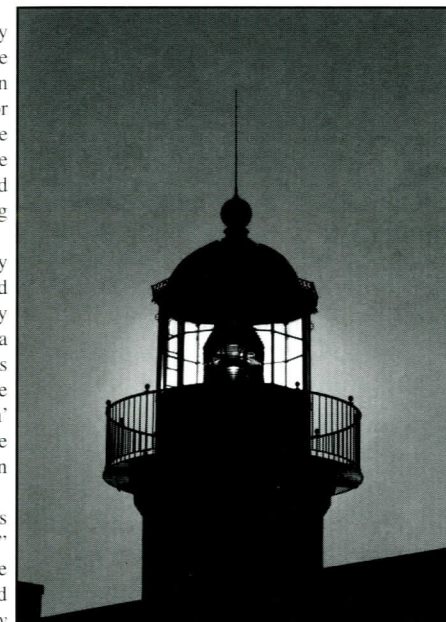
a mark in the crimson blood running from the ravaged Higgins's nose. The full force of the light's candlepower blinded him in moments.

Retired physician Preston Ellis was one of the few who remained in the crowd until the end. "As the beam struck him, he screamed," Ellis says. "I could see his face through my opera glasses as his pupils shrank away to nothing and his irises melt. But in that instant, he seemed to grow stronger. With no sight of his own, he managed to perfectly position his own light on the tomcat's eyes, forcing it off the target."

The mark was visible again, resplendent in a light intensified by the convex lens of all: sacrifice. Higgins collapsed and fell from his perch, never to work again, except as a hero to all who would follow him.

And they were legion.

Today, Pig Higgins leads a quiet, assisted life. His grandkids and their wives will come to visit, but the slow trickle of fans has finally petered out. Most of the time he can't remember the old days. But by Gershwin, without Higgins, the talent would still be glorified shadow puppets out there.



Above: A scene from Higgins's youth.



up goes the curtain

by Neothope Peters

MMMM (MMMM MMMM MMMM), SMELLS LIKE A HIT!

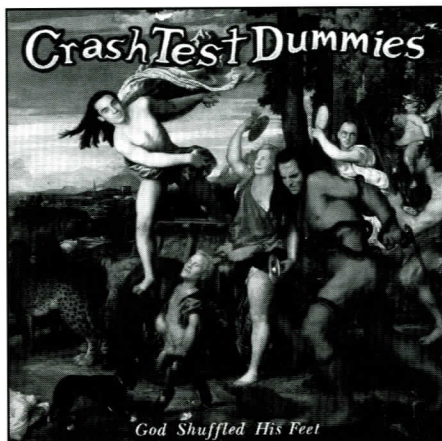
With the success of the ABBA-inspired musical *Mamma Mia*, the Billy Joel-based smash hit *Avenue Q*, and *Lennon*, based on the life and works of John Lennon, first-time writer George Quartz decided to take matters into his own hands.

"What you see in all of these shows is a whole musical based on a ton of different songs of a specific musical artist or artists. Though [these shows] have done well, viewers are getting sick of jumping from one song of say, John Lennon, right to another one of his songs. It's confusing, and crazy to think that your average show-goer is going to know every single song of one artist."

Quartz ran with this thinking to write the script and score for *Couldn't Quite Explain It*, the new musical based on the single hit song "Mmmm Mmmm Mmmm Mmmm," by the Crash Test Dummies, released in 1993. Scheduled for release in September of 2006, *Couldn't Quite* will, according to Quartz, stay within the "confines of the lyrics" of "Mmmm Mmmm Mmmm Mmmm," following the stories of three different young adults.

The first, "this kid," "got into an accident and couldn't come to school." Played by Josh Rebnitz, the "kid" eventually does come to school; however, "his hair [turns] from black," its original color, "into bright white." The "kid" spends an entire school day being badgered by other kids at school who wonder what happened to his hair (naturally). Yet, as the Dummies lament in their original "Mmmm...", the kid can only sputter "that it was from when the cars had smashed so hard." A mysterious explanation, indeed, but a powerfully moving Act I; this is not to be doubted.

After a transitory chorus number entitled



God Shuffled His Feet? More like He tap danced in the Crash Test Dummies' hit song musical.

"The Mmmms," the show moves into the second narrative, following the story of "this girl." Featuring songs entitled, "Birthmarks All Over Her Body," and "They'd Always Just Been There," Act II is perhaps the strongest of the three. Jenny Wendy, a newcomer to the stage and only a tender thirteen years old, belts these solos out with enough force to do the Dummies justice, and then some. In addition, make-up artist Trish Bavali's birthmarks are undoubtedly the best on Broadway.

Mirroring Act I, Act III follows "a boy." Of all the narratives, Quartz had the most difficulty transferring this one from song into stage. The lyrics are as follows: "Then there was a boy whose/ Parents made him come right home directly after school/ And when they went to their church/ They shook and lurched all over the church floor."

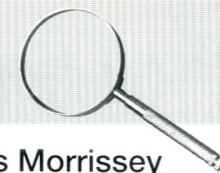
Quartz commented, "I couldn't be sure that the 'they' in the last line refers to the parents and the boy, or just the parents. This was really a sort of roadblock in my writing, because it changes the whole meaning of the song. I tried to reach the Dummies for comment, and finally did get in touch with Brad Roberts, lead vocals, but he said he didn't understand my question. It's hard when you don't have any proper nouns to deal with. But you know what, when I thought about it, the following two lines of the song just plain sum up the whole damn meaning of the thing."

Those two lines?

"They couldn't quite explain it/ They'd always just gone there."

Gone where? Don't be an idiot. Leave that to the Dummies. (Answer: Church)

theatre quiz



by Picodimas Morrissey



1. What adjective form of an elemental force is the namesake of the Midwestern city whose name is shared with a famous Broadway play?

- a) Earthy
- b) Fiery
- c) Hearty
- d) Watery
- e) Windy

2. _____ of the Opera

- a. Sprite
- b. Provost
- c. Wood Nymph
- d. Phantom

3. Behind one hand I am holding *Wicked*, *Les Miserables*, and *The Color Purple*. In my left hand I have *Hairspray* and *Mamma Mia*. If I put the contents of my two hands together and Johnny takes away the plays which have an odd number of letters, how many plays are left?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4

4. In which production of *Beauty and the Beast* does Ashley Brown play Belle?

- a) Frank Lloyd Wright's
- b) Hammacher Schlemmer's
- c) Ticketmaster's
- d) The Lion King's

5. The after-party for *Rent* is at the acute tip of an isosceles triangle shaped network of roads. The angle at the crux of the triangle is 15 degrees. You are at one of the non acute ends. At what angle must you walk to reach the after-party?

- a. 15 degrees
- b. 83 degrees
- c. 90 degrees
- d. 82.5 degrees

6. *The Producers* leave Baltimore traveling 50 miles per hour at 7:43pm while 43 miles away *Avenue Q* leaves Washington D.C. at 8:05 p.m traveling 65 miles per hour. After how much time do the two plays collide?

- a. 19 minutes
- b. 22 minutes
- c. 21 minutes
- d. 25 minutes

Answers: 1 Windy 2 Phantom 3 2 4 Ticketmaster's 5 83 degrees 6 25 minutes

Celebrity Choice:

kick it with the stars post show.

Gloria Estefan doesn't mind admitting that when it comes to her cocktails, she's got standards. In fact, she's got a little of the class that makes her one of Broadway's brightest stars this theatre season.

"I like a vodka martini," she says, "And I like it with tequila salt around the rim of my highball glass, and a plastic sword stuck through the olive."

In this city, refinement of that caliber brings Gloria to **The Swan and Gander**, a staff favorite here at **Playbill**, located near our office at Forty-fourth and Forty-Third between Fifth and Sixth. I'll be there on Thursday. We can hang out and play darts.

The Swan and Gander. 513.853.3420. 44th and 43rd between 5th and 6th.

Peter Dent, a native of Utah's Salt Lake City, has quite the discerning palette—and a rare condition that makes this celebrity's evening out after the show utterly unique.

"I'm allergic to salt," Dent says.

That means unsalted butter on soda bread at Spago's on Fourth and Fourth.

Dent affirms, "There's really nothing like it."

Spago's. 512.483.2380. 285 Fourth at Fourth.

The Kids' Menu!

Vorce is unique among current Broadway shows in that it features **FOUR (4)** of the theatre world's most talented young stars. We asked Manny, Pepper, Maggie and Beauregard, "What's your favorite food?"

Maggie: "Pepper!"

Pepper: "Carrots!"

Manny: "Alphabet Soup."

Beauregard: "You know, whatever."

Maggie and Pepper Rooter were born into a showbiz family and got right to work becoming stars, but that doesn't stop them from doing everything that kids with a mommy and a daddy do. After a show, their mother, soap star Janine Root, likes to take them to Jack's Diner with Beauregard Stevens or to Dolores's Cones down the block from the Constitutional Theatre, where they can meet with their tutor over double scoops of ice cream—Pepper prefers the mocha fudge, while Maggie goes for vanilla bean.

Dolores's has plenty of flavors—five in all, more than twice as many as would be needed for these identical twins to indulge their very unique personalities.

"After I am finished with dancing and singing; I want to be an astronaut," Pepper says, "and so I have to learn a lot."

"When I finish being an actress and wearing costume clothes and makeup," Maggie says, "I want to be Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen."

Dolores's Cones. 321.936.9563. Fourth and Fifth at Seventh. For information re: Jack's Diner, call Jack's Diner at 212-742-7123 or see directory entry above.

Rogers Vilking hails from London, England, where he used to spend his time between acting classes and rehearsals eating steak and kidney pie at local pubs, chasing down bites of innards with hearty pulls from a pint of ale. But where could a true Britisher find that sort of Old York authenticity in the Big Apple?

We here at the Celebrity Choice department figured the only way to find out was to ask Rogers himself. So we did. And Rogers himself told us, "Jokes about English cuisine are generally stupid."

We assume Rogers's favorite meal in New York is a deep-dish steak and kidney pie, which is actually an Italian/English cross-pollination. To get it, we assume Rogers makes a stop at **The Legs at Arms** after the velvet curtain falls.

"Actually, I order them. Online.

www.britishdelights.com."

"So do we," says Neville Suffix, the general manager of the The Legs at Arms. "Their pies are particularly fresh, and their online shopping cart system is particularly navigable."

This week at British Delights, 5.6 oz cans of clotted cream on sale.

The Legs at Arms. Forty-second at Forty-third. 210.572.5257.

Costume designer Chase Burkheimer likes a place where he can see and be seen.

"I design all my own clothing," Burkheimer says, "and so I like to think of every place I go as a sort of catwalk."

Unfortunately for Burkheimer, the only place he's found in all of Manhattan that sets off each ruffle of his personal label, *Troubador*, is the strip of sidewalk just in front of the **Constitutional Theatre** two hours after sunset.

"There's something very medieval about it," he says.

Burkheimer's favorite drink is a Relatively Experienced Virgin Shirley Temple.

"I have a deal with a convenience store up the

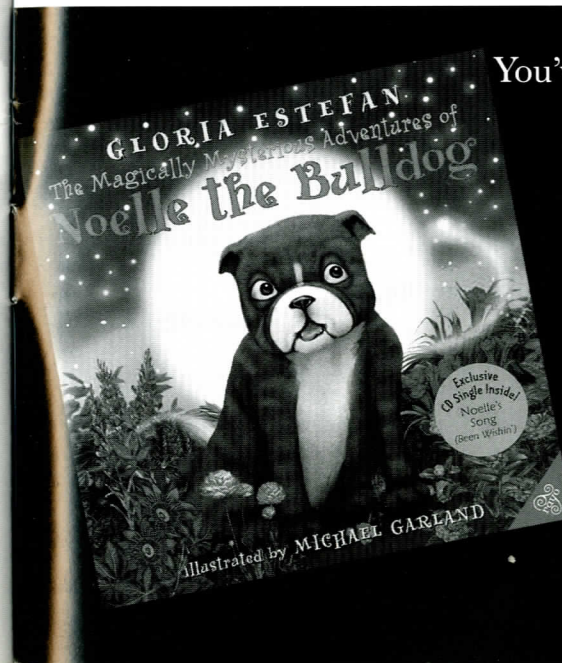
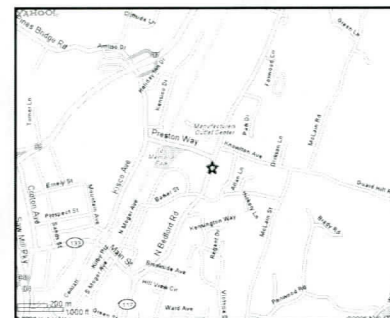
block. He lets me pour some cherry Schnapps in a SierraMist."

200-300 West Forty-Second Street. Chase: 217. 206.4683 (beeper).

Vince McReadey recommends **Applebee's Neighborhood Bar and Grill**.

"My father owns an Applebee's," he says.

Applebee's Neighborhood Bar and Grill. 914.526.9000. 3127 East Main St. Mohegan Lake, NY 10547.



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a brief encounter

with Bobbie Windsor

Bobbie Windsor, the 64-year-old Broadway choreographer known for her work in *The Lion King*, *Sweet Charity*, and *Hunger Town*, grew up on Long Island, the daughter of a prostitute and a housewife. A victim of child abuse, Windsor found escape through dance as a young girl. Fighting her way into the big city, she landed her break-out role in *A Chorus Line*, only to become, thirty years later, one of the premiere choreographers of our time. Most famous for her choreography in *The Lion King*, Windsor is never pompous or proud; she accredits all of her success to her father, "who abused her as a child." Curious about her extraordinary work in *The Lion King*, which enters its tenth season in July, *Playbill* sat down with Windsor to shuffle, flap, and do the tango.



Q *Ms. Windsor, since *The Lion King*'s Broadway debut in 1997, how much has the choreography of the show changed?*

A When you talk about choreography, you're talking about moves. I have always been a member of the party that considers the moves of one year irrelevant to the moves of another.

Q *So you don't believe it a priority to honor the original choreography?*

A Moves ebb and flow with the times. A twirl that was big in 1998 isn't going to look right in 2002. Similarly, a Double Stumper in 2004 plays great with the audience, whereas today, it would be insanely offensive to even attempt.

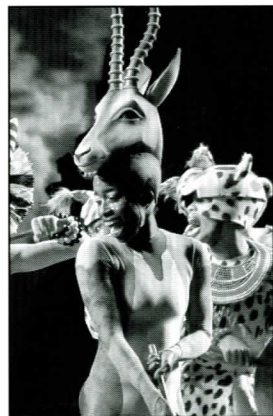
Q *What is the cause of these changes?*

A There are billions of causes. Specifically, in regards to the

Double Stumper, you've got to look at today's economy.

Q *How often would you say you change the choreography a year, then?*

A I like to be as hands-off as possible. There are captains of each animal group; this is something I've instituted from the beginning. So, okay, Princess Di dies. I go straight to the captain of the antelopes



The captain of the antelopes.

and I tell them to rearrange their moves and get back to me within a day. The same goes for every single animal group. The next day, their due date, I watch what they've come up with, and usually, it'll do.

Q *So you never actually instruct the dancers yourself?*

A I don't understand; I instruct them to come up with new moves within a day. The next day, their due date, I watch what they've come up with, and usually, it'll do.

Q *But you never actually tell them which specific choreography to do?*

A Very rarely.

Q *Who thought of the very first choreography?*

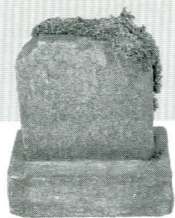
A The vocal director, Sam.



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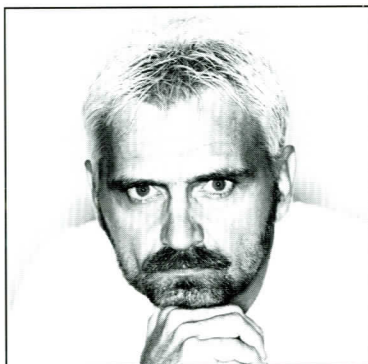


exit stage left

Theater Notables Who've Taken Their Final Bow



Left: Stately Janice Walker



Right: Ted Billings Stares Down Death

Janice Walker (1935-2006)

After a long career as a make-up artist on Broadway, Walker succumbed to lupus last week. Born in Obidiahnton, Pennsylvania, she was drawn to her art at a young age, painstakingly modifying the faces of her cornhusk dolls to have more wholesome facial expressions.

A devout Quaker, Walker spent 50 years backstage developing a reputation for prudence and unrelenting discipline. The Quaker was renowned for insisting that performers in her productions "not go out there all painted like whores." Many theatergoers came to recognize and welcome as a breath of fresh air the modest, plain faces that she presented nightly. She is survived by her brother Cadbury.

Martin St. Croix (1958-2006)

Martin St. Croix, a playwright with 13 works to his credit, passed last month due to mercury poisoning.

After his 1986 debut *Torment* met with sparse attendance and derisive reviews, his sophomore effort, an autobiographical piece entitled *Forging Torment*, chronicled the creative process and destructive toll of his first play. A wild success, St. Croix followed up *Forging Torment* with another introspective project, *A Made Man's Doubt*, which candidly discussed his complicated feelings towards fame in the wake of making it big.

Over the next 18 years, St. Croix penned 10 more plays, each dealing with his life in the aftermath of his last work. Theatergoers at first embraced the continuity and character development that emerged

in the series, but ultimately critics clamored for the scribe to demonstrate more versatility. St. Croix pledged to do just that, and retired to Tahiti, vowing to emerge with a masterwork.

A completed manuscript of *Present Tension: The Final Chapter* was found clutched to St. Croix's chest when his body was discovered. True to his promise, the play ignores the author's recent past and, in a masterful turn, focuses on the writing of itself. In the final scene, the playwright overcomes writer's block by drinking mercury.

Ted "Impresario" Billings (1911-2006)

Broadway's Iron Hand loosed its grip last week as Ted Billings passed away, a victim of rampaging violence at the Lusitania Playhouse.

Billings attended over 20,000 Broadway performances. Despite never working in any official capacity on a Broadway production, Billings shaped the modern theater experience immeasurably. A frequent writer of letters, he championed the cause of the audience in the face of increasing marginalization from Big Theater. Billings led the Groundling Revolt of 1953, protesting the cramped, inhumane conditions of the Old Regal playhouse and demanding major concessions, which arrived in the form of wider aisles, more legroom, and onion rings.

Late in life, Billings departed from some of his earlier firebrand ways, typically taking in his nightly show from a private balcony with only a few guests. His letter writing continued at a blistering pace, however, and few slights escaped his poison pen.

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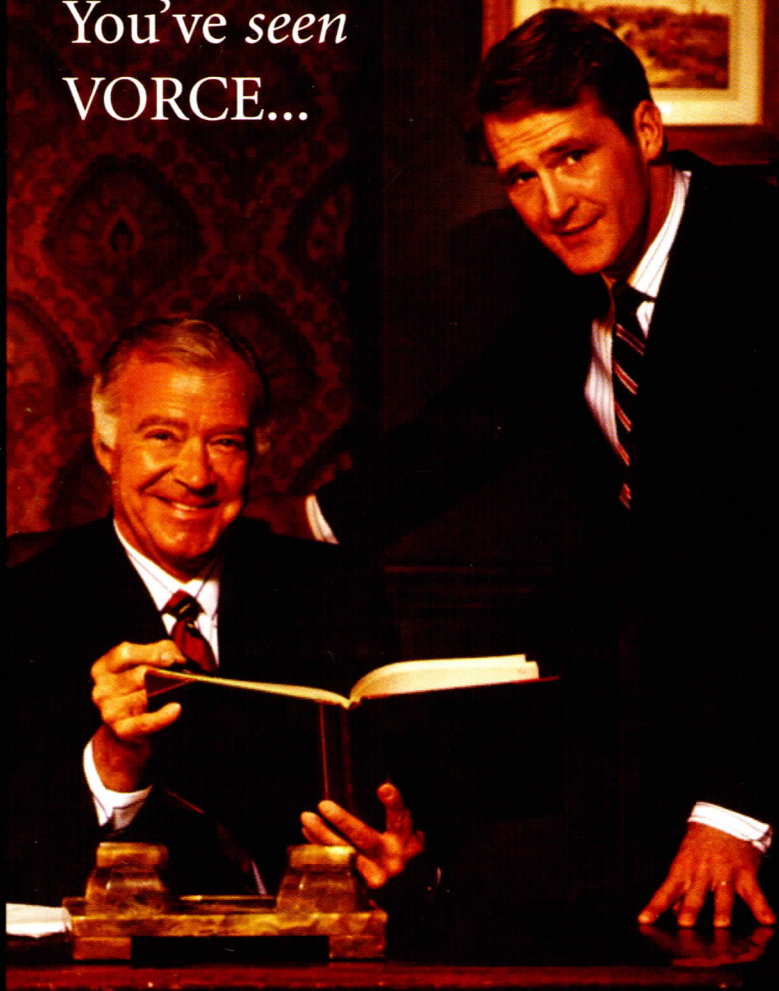
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