Welcome from Artistic Director Joseph Haj

Dear Friends,

Stephen Sondheim. He is inarguably our greatest living musical theater composer, and to call him a genius would be far from an overstatement. It’s an honor for us to bring his work to the Guthrie mainstage for the very first time this summer. That the show you’re about to share in is Sunday in the Park with George – Sondheim’s first of three award-winning collaborations with writer/director James Lapine – makes the occasion all the more thrilling. Sunday is one of the most intelligent musicals of the 20th century and was recognized for its brilliance with the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

That brilliance certainly lies in Sondheim’s inimitable score, crafted and based on painter Georges Seurat’s fascinating artistic style, pointillism. And there’s also a profound emotional intelligence to Sunday. What Sondheim and Lapine have so thoughtfully created with their lyrics and book explores themes that carry weight for all of us. In the quest toward a career, or in the quotidian tasks of any job, how do we stay connected to each other? How do we prioritize? When that job is a singular passion, is there room for love?

The gift of directing Sunday with such an amazing cast and creative team, is that I have been reminded of just how extraordinary artists can be, and how meaningful it is to work with professionals who have dedicated themselves so deeply to their craft. The Guthrie is made up of artists like that, both on stage and behind the scenes. It’s why we’re able to consistently present world-class theater and touch so many lives in our community.

I hope you enjoy Sunday in the Park with George as much as we have enjoyed creating this production for you.

Thank you for joining us!

Yours,
Sunday in the Park with George
music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
book by James Lapine
Originally directed on Broadway by James Lapine
Originally produced on Broadway by The Shubert Organization and Emanuel Azenberg
by arrangement with Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, which produced the original production of Sunday in the Park with George in 1983.

Cast
in order of appearance

1880s

GEORGE
DOT
OLD LADY
NURSE
FRANZ
JULES
YVONNE
BOATMAN
CELESTE #1
CELESTE #2
LOUIS
LOUISE
FRIEDA
SOLDIER
THE SOLDIER’S COMPANION
MR.
MRS.

Randy Harrison*
Erin Mackey*
Christine Toy Johnson*
Emily Gunyou Halaas*
Sasha Andreev*
Paul Nakauchi*
Ann Andreev*
Justin Lee Miller*
Cat Brindisi*
Christian Bardin
Max Wojtanowicz*
Maia Hernandez+/Natalie Tran+
Britta Ollmann*
David Darrow*
T. Mychael Rambo*
Emily Gunyou Halaas*

1980s

GEORGE
MARIE
DENNIS
NAOMI EISEN
ROBERT GREENBERG
HARRIET PAWLING
BILLY WEBSTER
CHARLES REDMOND
WAITER
PHOTOGRAPHER
ALEX
BETTY
ELAINE
LEE RANDOLPH
BLAIR DANIELS

Randy Harrison*
Erin Mackey*
David Darrow*
Ann Michels*
Paul Nakauchi*
Emily Gunyou Halaas*
Max Wojtanowicz*
T. Mychael Rambo*
Benjamin Lohrberg†
Christian Bardin
Sasha Andreev*
Cat Brindisi*
Britta Ollmann*
Justin Lee Miller*
Christine Toy Johnson*

The Guthrie gratefully recognizes
William & Penny George & The George Family Foundation as Platinum Producers, Anonymous as Leading Producer, Bill Lerot as Producer, and Martha Goldberg Aronson & Daniel Aronson, Dr. Mary Ebert & Paul Stember and Anne W. & Eldon C. Miller as Associate Producers of Sunday in the Park with George.

Setting
Island of La Grande Jatte and George’s Studio, Paris, 1880s. An American art museum then La Grande Jatte, 1980s.

Run Time
Approximately 2 hours, 45 minutes with one intermission

Understudies
Sasha Andreev* (George), Christina Baldwin* (Yvonne/Naomi Eisen/Celeste #1/Betty/Celeste #2/Photographer), Cat Brindisi* (Frieda/Elaine), David Darrow* (Franz/Alex), Lamar Jefferson* (Soldier/Dennis/Louis/Billy Webster/The Soldier’s Companion), Joel Liestman* (Jules/Robert Greenberg/Boatman/Lee Randolph/Mr./Charles Redmond), Norah Long* (Mrs./Nurse/Harriet Pawling/Old Lady/Blair Daniels), Britta Ollman* (Dot/Marie)

Understudies never substitute for performers unless announced prior to the performance.

The Guthrie’s rush line is made possible with support from Target.

Delta Air Lines is the Official Airline of the Guthrie Theater.
Creative Team

DIRECTOR: Joseph Haj
MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR: Mark Hartman
CHOREOGRAPHER: Christopher Windom
SCENIC DESIGNER: Jan Chambers
COSTUME DESIGNER: Toni-Leslie James
LIGHTING DESIGNER: Jane Cox
PROJECTION DESIGNER: Caite Hevner
SOUND DESIGNER: Elisheba Ittoop
DRAMATURG: Carla Steen
VOCAL COACH: Jill Walmsley Zager
COPYIST: Greg Theisen
STAGE MANAGER: Chris A. Code*
ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS: Justin Hossle*, Jane Heer*
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Addie Gorlin
CASTING CONSULTANT: McCorkle Casting, Ltd.
DESIGN ASSISTANTS: Lisa Jones (costumes), Polly Bilski (costumes), Ryan Connealy (lighting), Owen Moldow (projections), Reid Rejsa (sound associate)
INTERNS: Emily Gustafson (literary), Erin Cargill (stage management)
CHILD SUPERVISORS: Becca Chapin, Abby Littrell, Caitlin Miller, Emily Sullivan

Musicians

CONDUCTOR/PIANO: Mark Hartman
SYNTHESIZER: Greg Theisen
BASS: David Berg
VIOLA: Coca Bochonko
VIOLIN 1: Elise Parker
VIOLIN 2: Carolyn Boulay
CELLO: Joseph Englund
REED 1: Mark Henderson
REED 2: Bruce Thornton
PERCUSSION: Jay Johnson
OBOE/ENGLISH HORN: Merilee Klemp
FRENCH HORN: Gina Goettl
HARP: Nikki Lemire
SYNTHESIZER PROGRAMMING: Randy Cohen and Taylor Williams

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association  †Alternate performances
†Student in the University of Minnesota/Guthrie Theater B.F.A. Actor Training Program
Early on a Sunday morning in 1880s Paris on the island of La Grande Jatte, a young painter named George [Seurat] draws his mistress Dot. People enjoy their day off at the park, including painter Jules and his wife Yvonne, who have just seen George's most recent painting on exhibit, and a Nurse and an Old Lady, George's mother. Later that day at his studio, George works on his next painting while Dot prepares for the evening out that George promised her. When he gets absorbed in his painting and forgets, Dot storms out.

Another Sunday and George sketches while two young women named Celeste gossip about how Dot is now with Louis the baker. More visitors arrive and new and ongoing romantic entanglements become clear. Dot arrives with Louis and works on reading lessons from a grammar book. Mr. and Mrs., an American couple, love Louis' pastries but not much else about Paris. George meditates on having lost Dot because his art comes first. Dot returns to show George that she is pregnant with his child.

Later, at George’s studio, Dot asks for a painting George made of her and tells him she is marrying Louis. They’re interrupted by Jules and Yvonne. While Yvonne and Dot commiserate over being in a relationship with an artist, George explains to Jules his color theory and style of painting, hoping Jules can get the new painting seen. When they leave, Dot tells him she’s going to America with Louis, who has been hired by Mr. and Mrs.

Back on La Grande Jatte, George tells his nostalgic mother that he makes things beautiful in his art. Dot arrives with her baby daughter, Marie, hoping to get the painting of her before they all leave for America. As more visitors arrive, tempers flare and they all descend into chaos, which George brings to order. He arranges them into a tableau of Seurat’s “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte.”

Having held these positions for a long time, the characters...
complain about being stuck in a painting for eternity. The action moves to the American museum where the Seurat painting hangs and where another artist named George is presenting his latest sculpture, Chromolume #7, with his grandmother, Marie, to honor the painting’s 100th anniversary. During the reception, while George works the room, everyone talks about the hustle that is being an artist. Marie looks at the Seurat painting, finding her mother Dot’s image and telling George that their family, including his great-grandfather Seurat, and his art are both important.

George visits La Grande Jatte to present the Chromolume. Marie has passed away and he is sad, restless and hoping to find something in the park that will confirm Marie’s story about their family. In Marie’s grammar book, he finds notes Dot wrote long ago about the painter George. The island - and Dot - help him to recognize that there is still more he has to say as an artist.

**CHARACTERS**

1880s

**George**, Georges Seurat, an innovative painter

**Dot**, his mistress

**Old Lady**, George’s mother

**Nurse**, to the Old Lady

**Jules**, a famous painter

**Yvonne**, his wife

**Louise**, their daughter

**Franz**, a coachman working for Jules and Yvonne

**Frieda**, married to Franz, also works for Jules and Yvonne

**Boatman**

**Celeste #1**, a shopgirl

**Celeste #2**, a shopgirl

**Louis**, a baker

**Soldier**

**The Soldier’s Companion**

**Mr. and Mrs.**, an American couple visiting from Charleston

1980s

**George**, an innovative sculptor

**Marie**, his grandmother, Dot’s daughter

**Elaine**, George’s ex-wife

**Dennis**, an engineer working with George

**Naomi Eisen**, a composer working with George

**Robert Greenberg**, the museum’s director

**Lee Randolph**, the museum’s PR director

**Harriet Pawling**, a board member for the museum

**Billy Webster**, her friend

**Charles Redmond**, a museum director from Texas

**Alex**, an artist

**Betty**, an artist

**Blair Daniels**, an art critic

**Waiter**

**Photographer**
In late 1981, Broadway composer Stephen Sondheim suffered the spectacular flop of his show *Merrily We Roll Along*, that had baffled audiences and critics alike and run for a disastrous 16 performances. Discouraged and angry at the animosity the theater community was aiming at him and his collaborator Hal Prince, Sondheim was seriously considering giving up on the industry for good and doing something else with his life.

American musical theater might have lost an artistic giant had Sondheim not attended *Twelve Dreams* in 1982, an Off-Broadway play written and directed by graphic designer-turned-theater artist James Lapine. Blown away by the show, Sondheim asked to meet its creator after the performance. That backstage meeting was the beginning of a decade-long artistic collaboration that resulted in the award-winning musicals *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Into the Woods* and *Passion*.

By the time he met Lapine, Sondheim had already established himself as one of the most talented Broadway composers of the 20th century. Groomed from a young age by legendary lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II, Sondheim was seen as something of an iconoclast. Critics decried Sondheim’s refusal to follow the typical Broadway formula: his lyrics were dark and ironic, the subject matter “wrong,” his tunes not hummable. But Sondheim refused to pander to his critics, and his unconventionality earned him a cult following.

Lapine had forayed into theater almost accidentally and with none of Sondheim’s pedigree. In 1977, while teaching design at the Yale School of Drama, Lapine was persuaded by his students to direct a production of Gertrude Stein’s *Photograph*, which eventually moved to a small, Off-Broadway performance space and won Lapine an Obie Award. In 1978, coming off the success of *Photograph*, Lapine was approached to create a play for the Music-Theatre Group – the play that four years later would profoundly affect Stephen Sondheim.

From the start of their collaboration, the duo proved to be well-balanced: Lapine’s easy-going attitude contrasted well with Sondheim’s meticulousness, as did Sondheim’s experience with Lapine’s fresh eye for visuals. The team debuted in 1984 with *Sunday in the Park with George*. Inspired by the broad “cast” of characters and the stage-like setting of Georges Seurat’s iconic painting “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte,” Sondheim and Lapine crafted a musical around the legendary but mysterious artist. “The more one looks at that painting, the more one discovers things going on that initial investigation doesn’t reveal,” Lapine said. “It became apparent there was a lot to explore.”

And explore they did. Developing *Sunday in the Park with George* Off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons allowed the creators to tweak the show even after opening night; the musical’s most well-known song, “Finishing the Hat,” wasn’t written until several nights into the run. The Broadway production opened May 2, 1984, at the Booth Theatre. Despite receiving mixed reviews, *Sunday* was a commercial success and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1985.

Sondheim and Lapine went on to co-create the award-winning musicals *Into the Woods* (1987) and *Passion* (1994). Lapine was inducted to the Theater Hall of Fame in 2011 and adapted the screenplay for *Into the Woods* in 2014. Sondheim has received more Tony Awards (eight) than any other composer in history, among other honors, and is reportedly working on a new musical with playwright David Ives.
From Paint to Pixels

Through a collaboration with local digital fabric and clothing designer Becka Rahn, the Guthrie Store features an exclusive product line inspired by painter Georges Seurat.

What began as a work study job washing paintbrushes in her college theater’s scene shop has evolved into a successful career as a digital fabric designer for Minneapolis-based artist Becka Rahn. This summer the Guthrie Store offers a stunning collection of her scarves, bow ties, purses and pouches.

“When [Guthrie Director of Retail] Kay McGuire invited me to collaborate on something special for the store, I was thrilled that Sunday and Seurat were to be my inspiration,” says Rahn.

Inspired by Seurat’s famous painting “A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte,” Rahn used hand-painted and recycled papers to create cut paper illustrations of parasols, black dogs, paint palettes and sailboats. Each illustration was transformed into a digital file where Rahn added the distinctive dots associated with Seurat’s unique artistic style called pointillism. The designs were then printed onto fabric using a specialized ink jet printer.

Rahn aptly pointed out, “Rather than dots of paint, my pixels were transformed from dots of light on the screen to dots of ink on the fabric. I like to think Seurat would have appreciated that.”


Stop by the Guthrie Store, or visit guthriestore.com to purchase work by Rahn and other local artists.