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<http://www.therhino.org/press.htm>

*Theatre Rhinoceros presents...*

**The Bay Area Premiere of the Stephen Sondheim Musical**

**ROAD SHOW**

**Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim**

**Book by John Weidman**

**Orchestrations by Jonathan Tunick**

**Starring Bill Fahrner \* and Rudy Guerrero\***

**Musical Direction by Dave Dobrusky**

**Directed by John Fisher**

**Bay Area Premiere - Limited Engagement - 15 Performances Only!**

**January 2 – 19, 2014 - MUST CLOSE JANUARY 19**

**Wed. - Sat. - 8:00 pm / Sun. - 3:00 pm**

**Previews Jan. 2 & 3 (Thurs. & Fri.) – Opens Sat. Jan. 4 - 8:00 pm**

**Eureka Theatre in SF [www.TheRhino.org](http://www.TheRhino.org)**

*\*Member Actor's Equity Association*

**Trailer: <http://tinyurl.com/kwegjmf>**

*“Addison and Wilson Mizner were born within a year and a half of each other in the early 1870s in Benicia, CA. During the course of their long, colorful and often chaotic lives, they criss-crossed the country – sometimes separately, sometimes together – trying their hands at a dizzying array of different enterprises and pursuits from prospecting for gold in the Yukon to promoting a utopian real-estate venture during the Florida land boom. Addison died in Palm Beach in 1933, leaving behind a handful of uniquely designed Mizner houses. Wilson died within weeks of him, in Hollywood. ROAD SHOW is the story of their lives – or at any rate our version of it.” - Stephen Sondheim & John Weidman*

**Theatre Rhino does Sondheim.** We have not just chosen any Sondheim musical usually done by regional theatres, but the obscure **ROAD SHOW**. This musical has had many incarnations (previously titled *Bounce*, and before that *Wise Guys* and *Gold!*), but the few people who have seen it may not have seen this version being presented by Theatre Rhino. **ROAD SHOW**, Sondheim's first **new** musical since his Tony Award-winning *Passion* in 1994, reunited the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning composer with book writer Weidman (*Assassins*, *Pacific Overtures*) and Tony Award-winning director John Doyle (*Sweeney Todd*, *Company*). The production played an extended run Off-Broadway at the Public Theater in 2008, but beyond a 2011 London remounting at the Menier Chocolate Factory, the musical has remained unseen by audiences until now.

Spanning 40 years, from the Alaskan Gold Rush to the Florida real estate boom in the 1930s, **Road Show**, featuring music and lyrics by Sondheim and book by John Weidman, is the story of two brothers whose quest for the American dream turns into a test of morality and judgment that changes their lives in unexpected ways.

The musical stars Bay Area favorites **Bill Fahrner\*** (Addison Mizner) and **Rudy Guerrero\*** (Wilson Mizner). The other cast members are **Michael Doppe, Kim Larsen, Justin Lucas, Kate McCarthy, Ae'Jay Mitchell, Kathryn Wood & Sarah Young.**

*ROAD SHOW* is directed by the Glickman and Critics' Circle Award-winning **John Fisher.** Lighting Design / Stage Manager: **Colin Johnson**; Costume Design by **Scarlett Kellum**; Scenic Design by **Gilbert Johnson**; Photography by **Kent Taylor**; Musical Direction by 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Moon and Rhino favorite **Dave Dobrusky.**

**Road Show** will have its Bay Area premiere in this exclusive **Theatre Rhinoceros** production in San Francisco for a limited engagement – 15 performances only! The show plays **Jan. 2 – 19, 2014 - Wed. - Sat. - 8:00 pm / Sun. - 3:00 pm. Previews Jan. 2 & 3 (Thurs. & Fri.)** (No Press at Previews please.) – **Opening night is Sat. Jan. 4 - 8:00 pm.** Performances: **Sun., Jan. 5** thru **Sun., Jan. 19, 2014. MUST CLOSE JANUARY 19.** Dates / Times: **Wed. - Sat. - 8:00 pm, Sun., Jan. 5 - 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm, Sundays, Jan. 12 and Jan. 19 - 3:00 pm only.** Individual perf. dates are: **Jan. 2, 3 (previews), 4 (opening), 5 (2 shows – 3 & 7 pm) / 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 / 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 2014.** Shows are at **The Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson St.** (btwn. Front & Battery, in SF 94111, Embarcadero BART)

Tickets are \$15 - \$30 and are available at <http://www.therhino.org/buy.htm> or 1-800- 838-3006. (Previews are pay-what-you-wish.)

To arrange an interview with director **John Fisher**, or any of the actors or for additional info, please call or e-mail **Lawrence Helman** at 415/ 661-1260 / [lhelman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lhelman@sbcglobal.net)

Theatre Rhino's previous presentation of a Stephen Sondheim musical - *Marry Me a Little* - was in February 2011 and was a hit with critics and audiences.

**PRE-SHOW NIGHTLY PRESENTATION by Director John Fisher**  
**"Stephen Sondheim: The Composer and his Context"**  
**Nightly starting on January 9, 2014**

7:30 pm nightly/2:30 pm Sunday Matinees starting on Jan. 9, 2014 - One half hour before each performance the director will give a brief presentation about Stephen Sondheim, his career and the evolution of Sondheim and John Weidman's **Road Show**. This presentation is included in the price of admission.

**Theatre Rhinoceros**, America's longest running and most adventurous queer theatre, develops and produces professional works of theatre that enlighten, enrich, and explore both the ordinary and the extraordinary aspects of our queer community.

Note: in a fortuitous and synchronistic stroke of good fortune, The Benicia Historical Museum in Benicia, CA has on exhibit a show about the Mizner Brothers - born in Benicia, CA. Now thru Jan. 2104. Info below. **(Would make a good tie-in/ sidebar item to a story about ROAD SHOW).**

[http://beniciahistoricalmuseum.org/Events/events\\_home.htm](http://beniciahistoricalmuseum.org/Events/events_home.htm)

**"THOSE AMAZING MIZNERS: BENICIA'S CELEBRATED CLAN"**

Current exhibit through January 2014

Come learn about the achievements and pratfalls of this powerful local dynasty and iconic American family who inspired Stephen Sondheim to pen the musical "Road Show"

Benicia Historical Museum - 2060 Camel Rd. Benicia CA. 94510 Tel. 707- 745-5435

**Museum Hours Wed. - Sun.1 - 4pm** Adults \$5 Seniors/students \$3 Children 6-12 \$2.00 (5 & under free)

## Bios:

**Bill Fahrner\*** (Addison Mizner), returns to Theatre Rhinoceros after his performance in the two-character Stephen Sondheim hit *Marry Me a Little* in 2011. Bill has been seen in more than 30 musicals with 42nd Street Moon (including works by Kern, Hammerstein, Porter, Rodgers & Hart, Berlin, Monnot, and the Gershwins). He has also worked with Center REP (*Godspell*, *Drood*, *Heartbeats*) and Woodminster (*Brigadoon*, *Paint Your Wagon*). Bill has won a BATCC and two Dean Goodman Awards.

**Rudy Guerrero\*** (Wilson Mizner) is very happy to return to The Rhino after his performance as Sam and Man in the controversial *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You?* (June 2013). Regional theater credits include performances at 42<sup>nd</sup> St. Moon, Alcazar Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre (ACT), Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Connecticut Repertory Theater, Foothill Music Theater (winner of the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award for his Principal Performance as the "Leading Player" in *Pippin*), Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, Magic Theatre, Marin Shakespeare Company, Marin Theatre Company, Pacific Alliance Stage Company, SF Playhouse, TheatreWorks, Willows Theater Company, and Word for Word. TV credits include principal role in the Emmy Award-Winning Tele-Play, *Secrets*. Rudy has a BFA in Musical Theater from the Boston Conservatory and a MFA in Acting from the ACT.

\* *The Actor appears through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.*

**John Fisher** (Director) Fisher's plays include *The Joy of Gay Sex*, which was produced Off-Broadway, and *Medea: The Musical*, which was produced as a part of the HBO Comedy Arts Festival and ran for eighteen months in its original San Francisco production. John is a two-time winner of the Will Glickman Playwright Award, and a recipient of an NEA Project Grant, a GLAAD Media Award, two L.A. Weekly Awards, a Garland Award, two Cable Car Awards, a San Francisco Bay Guardian Goldie Award, and five Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Awards. He holds a Ph.D. in Dramatic Art from the UC Berkeley and has taught at UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, ACT and at the Yale School of Drama. Recent work includes *SexRev: The José Sarría Experience*, a Theatre Rhino production at CounterPULSE.

**Stephen Sondheim** (music/lyrics) was born in NYC. His father, Herbert Sondheim, was a successful dress manufacturer, his mother, Janet Fox, a fashion designer. Young Stephen was given piano lessons from an early age, and showed a distinct aptitude for music, puzzles and mathematics. His parents divorced when he was only ten, and Stephen, an only child, was taken by his mother to live on a farm in Bucks County, PA. The area had attracted a number of well-known personalities from the NY theater world; a close neighbor was the playwright, lyricist and producer Oscar Hammerstein II, who had a son Stephen's age. Stephen Sondheim and Jimmy Hammerstein soon became friends, and Stephen came to see the older Hammerstein as a role model. At the time, Hammerstein was inaugurating his historic collaboration with composer Richard Rodgers. When Sondheim was in his teens, Rodgers & Hammerstein were enjoying unprecedented success with the shows *Oklahoma!* and *South Pacific*. Sondheim resolved that he too would write for the theater.

Sondheim studied piano seriously through his prep school years, while Hammerstein tutored him in writing for the theater. With Hammerstein's guidance, he wrote scripts and scores for four shows, a project that occupied Sondheim through his student years at Williams College. On graduation, he was awarded a two-year scholarship to study composition. He studied with the avant-garde composer Milton Babbitt, writing a piano concerto and a violin sonata while trying to break into the theater. Sondheim's efforts at securing a B'way. assignment fell through, but he found work writing for TV, and met two playwrights who played a significant role in his career: Arthur Laurents and Burt Shevelove.

Although Sondheim aspired to write both words and music, his first Broadway assignments called on him to write either one or the other. At age 25 he was hired to write lyrics for Leonard Bernstein's music in the landmark musical *West Side Story*. Before *WSS* opened, he made his Broadway debut as a composer, with incidental music to N. Richard Nash's play, *The Girls of Summer*. After the success of *WSS* in 1957, he won a second lyric-writing assignment for the Broadway musical *Gypsy*. Both shows

had scripts by Arthur Laurents and were directed by Jerome Robbins.

The credit, "Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim" finally appeared on Broadway for the first time in 1962. The show, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, was an unqualified success, and introduced the first of Sondheim's tunes to become a show business standard, "Comedy Tonight." The script for *Forum* was co-written by Sondheim's friend, Burt Shevelove. Sondheim collaborated with Arthur Laurents again on *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964). The show closed almost immediately, but has since become a cult favorite; its title song remains a favorite of Sondheim's admirers.

Sondheim returned to the role of lyricist-for-hire one more time to collaborate with Hammerstein's old partner Richard Rodgers on *Do I Hear a Waltz?* in 1965. From then on, he would insist on writing both music and lyrics, although nearly five years would elapse before a new Sondheim musical opened on Broadway. Royalties from *West Side Story*, *Gypsy* and *Forum*, all of which were made into motion pictures, freed him to develop projects of his choosing. In the meantime, he published a remarkable series of word puzzles in *NY Magazine*. Many critics have related his love of puzzles and word games to the dazzling word play of his lyrics, with their intricate rhyme schemes, internal rhymes, puns and wide-ranging allusions.

Sondheim made a historic breakthrough as both composer and lyricist with *Company* (1971), a caustic look at love and marriage in contemporary NYC. The show marked a sharp break with Broadway's past, and established Sondheim as the most inventive and daring composer working in the musical theater. *Company* was Sondheim's first collaboration with director Harold Prince, who had produced both *West Side Story* and *Forum*. Sondheim's second collaboration with Prince as director, *Follies*, paid masterful tribute to the song styles of Broadway's past, while deploying them to ironic effect in a poignant commentary on the disappointment of middle age and the corrosive effects of nostalgia and self-delusion.

While Sondheim's admirers stood in awe of his accomplishments, his detractors claimed that his work was too bitter to win wide popularity, and his music too sophisticated for popular success. His next production, *A Little Night Music*, put these doubts to rest. Its elegant, waltz-based score and warm humor charmed audiences on both sides of the Atlantic, while its signature song, "Send in the Clowns," became an unexpected pop standard.

Sondheim received Tony Awards for the music and lyrics of all three of these shows. The following year, the winning composer thanked Sondheim, "for not writing a show this year." Sondheim did find time in 1974 to write a show for a performance in the Yale University swimming pool, an adaptation of the classical Greek comedy *The Frogs*, with a script by his old friend Burt Shevelove. He also co-wrote the screenplay for the intricate murder mystery, *The Last of Sheila* (1973). From '73-'81, Sondheim served as President of the Dramatists Guild, the professional association of playwrights, theatrical composers and lyricists.

Never content to continue along comfortable or familiar lines, Sondheim and Harold Prince explored further new territory with *Pacific Overtures* (1976), an imaginative account of relations between Japan and the United States, from the 1850s to the present. *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (1979), adapted an early Victorian melodrama in a combination of grand guignol, bitter satire and Sondheim's most complex score yet. *Sweeney Todd* enjoyed a healthy run and brought Sondheim another Tony Award. While a number of Sondheim's shows have enjoyed successful revivals in the commercial theater, *Sweeney Todd* and *A Little Night Music* have found a second home in the opera houses of the world, where classical standards of musicianship can do justice to their soaring scores.

*Sweeney Todd* marked the climax of Sondheim's long collaboration with Harold Prince. *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), adapted from a bittersweet Kaufman & Hart drama of the 1930s, was the last of their shows together. Although Sondheim and Prince remained close friends, they sought renewed inspiration in collaboration with others. Sondheim embarked on a partnership with playwright and director James Lapine.

The first fruit of their collaboration was *Sunday in the Park With George* (1984), a work inspired by

Georges Seurat's pointillist painting, "Sunday Afternoon On the Isle of the Grande Jatte." The play intertwines the story of Seurat and his mistress with that of a contemporary painter and his lover. *Sunday in the Park With George* was a solid success, and brought Sondheim and Lapine the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, a rare instance of the Pulitzer committee honoring a musical play. *Into the Woods* (1987), another collaboration with Lapine, sought the meaning inside some of the most familiar childhood fairy tales, and has been produced successfully all over the USA.

Between B'way. assignments, Sondheim has written scores for the films *Stavisky* (1974) and *Reds* (1981), and contributed songs to the films *The Seven Percent Solution* (1976) and *Dick Tracy* (1990). "Sooner or Later," written for *Dick Tracy*, won him an Oscar for Best Song. In 1990, Sondheim spent a term as the first Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theatre at Oxford (UK). In USA he was honored with the National Medal of Arts.

One of Sondheim's most disturbing productions was *Assassins* (1990), an examination of the motives and delusions of the men who murdered American presidents. *Passion* (1994), collaboration with James Lapine, took a dark, intimate story of unrequited love and set it to music of heartrending poignancy.. *Bounce*, recounting the follies of the 1920s Florida land boom, opened in Chicago and Washington in 2003. Its script, like that of *Pacific Overtures* and *Assassins*, was written by the playwright John Weidman.

Stephen Sondheim's 75th birthday was celebrated with all-star tribute concerts in NY, London and LA. In 2008, the American Theatre Wing presented him with a special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement. At the time, two of his shows, *Gypsy* and *Sunday in the Park With George*, were enjoying successful revivals on Broadway. Sondheim has gathered the first 27 years of his writing for the stage in his 2010 book, *Finishing the Hat: Collected Lyrics (1954-1981) with Attendant Comments, Principles, Heresies, Grudges, Whines and Anecdotes*. The book provides invaluable insight into the art and craft of songwriting, as practiced by an artist of monumental accomplishment.

Over the last 50 years, Sondheim has set an unsurpassed standard of brilliance and artistic integrity in the musical theater. His music, steeped in the history of the American stage, is also deeply informed by the classical tradition and the advances of modern concert music. His words, unequalled in their wit and virtuosity, have recorded a lifetime of profound, unblinking insight into the joys and sorrows of life and love.

He wrote the new book for the 2011 revival of *Anything Goes*. He wrote the book for *Pacific Overtures* (Tony nominations, Best Book and Best Musical), score by Stephen Sondheim, produced & directed on Broadway by Harold Prince. He co-authored, with Timothy Crouse, the new book for Lincoln Center Theater's revival of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* (Tony Award, Best Musical Revival; Olivier Award, Best Musical Production). He wrote the book for *Assassins*, score by Stephen Sondheim, directed Off-Broadway by Jerry Zaks and in London's West End (Drama Critics Award for Best Musical) by Sam Mendes. *Happiness*, score by Scott Frankel and Michael Korie, directed & choreographed by Susan Stroman; and *Take Flight*. He wrote the book for *Big* (Tony nomination, Best Book), score by Richard Maltby, Jr. and David Shire, directed on B'way. by Mike Ockrent, and co-created with choreographer/director Susan Stroman the musical *Contact* (Tony nomination, Best Book; Tony Award, Best Musical). *Bounce/Road Show*, score by Stephen Sondheim, direction by Harold Prince, premiered at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. He is currently completing a screen adaptation of *Contact* for Miramax. Since 1986, he has written for *Sesame Street*, receiving more than a dozen Emmy Awards for Outstanding Writing for a Children's Program. From 1999 to 2009 he served as president of the Dramatists Guild of America.

## Calendar Editors:

WHAT: *Theatre Rhinoceros presents...*

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Book by John Weidman

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Directed by John Fisher

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TIX: Tickets are \$15-\$30 - (Previews are pay what you wish.)

available at <http://www.therhino.org/buy.htm> or 1-800- 838-3006

VENUE: **The Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson St.** (btwn. Front & Battery Sts., in SF 94111 Embarcadero BART)

Directions to Theatre & Parking: <http://www.theeurekatheatre.com/Directions.html>

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And Don't Miss Our Special **New Year's Eve Performance**

of the Hit Show **FOODIES: THE MUSICAL**

The wildly funny musical comedy about restaurants and fine dining.

"Hysterical!" SF Chronicle

**Tues. 12/31/13 – 8:00 pm**

**Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson, SF**

TIX: \$25 [www.TheRhino.org](http://www.TheRhino.org)

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