

The Man and the Pen

Late on Tuesday evening, 4 October 1955, the opening night party for *Island of Goats* was underway. The play – an English adaptation of Ugo Betti’s *Delitto all’isola delle capre* (‘Crime on Goat-Island’) – would close after all of seven performances. However the cast and crew felt that night, Stephen Sondheim, who did not attend the play’s opening, had his own reasons for feeling downcast. His hoped-for professional debut as a composer–lyricist – *Saturday Night* (book by Julius Epstein based on a play by Julius and his twin brother, Philip) – had lost its main producer, Lemuel Ayers, who had died of leukemia two months earlier.

At the party, Sondheim felt somewhat out of place until he spied Arthur Laurents across the room. They had met some months earlier, when Laurents had attended an audition for a musical version of James M. Cain’s 1937 book, *Serenade*. In his memoir, Laurents recounted Sondheim’s rendition of songs from *Saturday Night*.¹ Sondheim had his own takeaway:

I was invited [to the opening night party of *Island of Goats*] by Burt Shevelove, and I didn’t know anyone there since Burt hadn’t arrived yet. Then in the corner I spotted Arthur Laurents. I went over to make small talk and I asked him what he was doing and he said that he was just about to begin a musical of *Romeo and Juliet* with Leonard Bernstein and Jerry Robbins. I asked, just idly, ‘Who’s doing the lyrics?’ and Arthur literally smote his forehead, which I think is the only time I’ve ever seen anybody literally smite his forehead, and he said, ‘I never thought of you and I liked your lyrics very much. I didn’t like your music, but I did like your lyrics a lot.’ Arthur is nothing if not frank. So he invited me to meet and play for Bernstein, which I agreed to do because I thought it might be very glamorous to meet Lenny.²

Someone in the fall of 1955 might be forgiven for not knowing where Sondheim would land as a man of the theatre. In college he had written a radio play, music and lyrics for three different musicals, the book for two of those musicals, short stories and satire, music criticism, a piano sonata,

and the beginning of a novel. He had also earned acclaim for his abilities as an actor. The year after his graduation from Williams College found him completing a concertino for two pianos and a sonata for violin solo. He wrote a TV script for Jack Lemmon, then a budding young actor; between October 1953 and February 1954 he collaborated on eleven television scripts for the comedy series *Topper*. He had an apprenticeship of sorts with his mentor, Oscar Hammerstein II: two of the Williams musicals fulfilled half of the apprenticeship; a third, a musical based on P. L. Travers's *Mary Poppins*, failed to find its final form; neither did the fourth, *Climb High*. By early 1954 Sondheim had much to show from his efforts to write the book for a musical, but none of those efforts was polished enough to take the stage.

These scripts, sketches, and scores – nearly everything from 1946 to 1965 – are currently housed in the library and archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.³ These early materials have provided scholars and writers grist for popular and scholarly work, most notably Stephen Banfield's *Sondheim's Broadway Musicals* with its twenty-one pages on Sondheim's pre-*West Side Story* activities;⁴ Meryle Secrest's *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, which has a rich portrait of Sondheim's development;⁵ and my own articles and book that trace the foundations of Sondheim's musicodramatic style.⁶ To my knowledge, neither Banfield nor Secrest nor I have fully disentangled the composer from the lyricist nor fully explained reactions such as Laurent's's.

Despite the plethora of scripts at Wisconsin, it is clear that Sondheim did not wish to be characterized as a writer of words. The 1965 biography that accompanies the Wisconsin finding guide talks about how

Sondheim's latest collaboration as a lyricist has been with Hammerstein's former partner, Richard Rodgers, for the musical *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965). Rodgers commented on Sondheim's style, 'It has a curious way of making people sing as if they were talking.'

Despite these attainments in writing lyrics, Sondheim has said that he does not especially enjoy writing them. Instead, he prefers to write music.⁷

In the first volume of his collected lyrics and the 'attendant comments, principles, heresies, grudges, whines and anecdotes' that go along with them, published forty-five years later, Sondheim returned to make the same point: that he was a composer first and foremost, and that meeting the composer for *West Side Story* only exacerbated his own desire to write for the musical stage. He said of the not-so-glamorous meeting with Bernstein

that, notwithstanding his experience with Julius Epstein, working with Bernstein, Laurents, and Robbins was entirely different:

To begin with, not only was I for the first time writing lyrics to someone else's music, the someone else was a legend verging on myth, whose score for *On the Town*, from the moment I'd heard it sizzling out of the orchestra pit when I was fourteen, had given me that rush of excitement you rarely get from musicals: a fresh individual and complex sound, a new kind of music.⁸

After recounting his audition for Bernstein, which reads as though the headstrong young man was in the presence of an inscrutable oracle, the eighty-year-old Sondheim tells the reader how the twenty-five-year-old Sondheim felt:

I left with mixed feelings: I wanted to be asked to the party, I just didn't want to go. The fact was, and still is, that I enjoy writing music much more than lyrics . . . I had the good sense to discuss all this with Oscar and it was he who persuaded me that if I was offered the job, I should leap at it. . . . When Lenny phoned a week later and invited me to join the crew, I duly leapt.

I have only two regrets about that decision. First, it tagged and then dogged me with the label 'lyricist,' so that when my music finally popped into the open two shows and five years later, I was dismissed by some as an overly ambitious pretender who should stick to his own side of the street. (The label has persisted to this day, though with less intensity.) [The second regret recounts Sondheim's feelings that the lyrics for *West Side Story* are too 'poetic,' to use Bernstein's word.]⁹

The materials in Wisconsin provide the hard evidence of what Sondheim was doing from 1946 to the premiere of *West Side Story* in 1957. Two other more recent sources shine a light on the more affective aspects of this period in Sondheim's life. The two volumes of his lyrics buttress the opinion of Laurents and others who saw in these words a master at work. And two commercially available recordings, both titled *Sondheim Sings* and both released in 2005, serve as sonic witnesses, placing the astute listener alongside Laurents and others who heard Sondheim sing and play his songs. Together, these two sources make Laurents's assessment easier to comprehend: the lyrics rival those from the best in the business, while the music is not unlike Sondheim's description of Bernstein's music: 'a fresh individual and complex sound, a new kind of music.' And given that he did not have the profile that Bernstein the composer had, Sondheim the composer was more easily dismissed. One can imagine Bernstein parroting Laurents: 'I don't like your music, but I do like your lyrics a lot.'

‘I liked your lyrics very much’

The audition that Laurents heard occurred around the time that Sondheim attended a gathering at lyricist E. Y. ‘Yip’ Harburg’s apartment. Also there that afternoon were composers Burton Lane (*Finian’s Rainbow*, 1947) and Harold Arlen (*House of Flowers*, 1954; ‘The Man That Got Away’ from the film *A Star Is Born* was released that year, although Judy Garland had recorded it the year before). Both Lane and Arlen ‘played some stuff.’ Then it was Sondheim’s turn. He recalled that he played three numbers: ‘a fast, a slow, and a fast.’

Harburg or someone said, ‘This is the promising young composer.’ And I got up and played [‘Saturday Night’], and everybody applauded very loudly. And I played ‘This Is Nice, Isn’t It?’, and they applauded even more loudly. And I ended with this screaming 2/4, ‘One Wonderful Day,’ and they all cheered.

And I sat down, very pleased with myself, on the couch next to Harold Arlen. And he turned to me and he said – devastating me – ‘You’re afraid not to write a blockbuster, aren’t you?’ I wanted to go under the couch.¹⁰

A look at the lyrics for these three songs and others from *Saturday Night* – his first professional musical – show that, as a wordsmith, Sondheim was indeed writing blockbusters.

Sondheim patted himself on the back for his ability ‘to imitate the Jewish Brooklynese of the Epstein brothers as if I’d been born in Greenpoint.’¹¹ The title song situates us in Jewish Brooklyn in its very first lines. Four guys are gathered at a home in Brooklyn. Ted is on the phone, trying to get a date with some woman; Ray bets that Ted will fail; Ray relates his opinion about Ted to Artie and offers up an alternate plan for the evening.

RAY

He’s gonna get the axe from huh –
What would ya say to seein’ a
Pitcha?

After apparently nixing the notion of seeing ‘the combination [possibly a double feature] of Johnny Mack Brown and Bessie Love’ at a nearby movie palace, Ray offers up another option that he found in the Sunday *New York Times*. Artie voices his disapproval in rather colourful terms:

RAY

Here’s a revival of ‘Ben Huh,’
Goes on at nine-fifteen at the
Cushman.

ARTIE

So when I got my mind on sex
Who gives a damn for Francis X.
Bushman?¹²

Dino, the fourth fellow at the house, plays a honky-tonk number on the piano, Artie strums a ukulele, and the ennui and desperation of the guys comes through in the sharpness of their dialogue in the form of Sondheim's lyrics.

As for Sondheim's characterization of 'Isn't It?' as a slow song, it might be more accurately described as a waltz, a dance that appears repeatedly in Sondheim's *oeuvre*. In fact, the materials in Wisconsin include two undated piano compositions, each named 'Waltz.' Both have the mien of French cabaret music with a whiff of Ravel thrown in. Given the character's (Helen) affectation of being from the South (she, too, is from Brooklyn), a waltz seems appropriate for her attempt to portray herself as a Southern belle. The lyric itself is fairly straightforward, containing just a few internal rhymes but organized around the last word in each stanza – 'band-demand-hand-grand' – while at the same time reminding us that this era features a red-hot stock market.

HELEN

Don't you think
We make natural partners?
Ah mean, like food and drink,
Or supply and demand?¹³

The 'screaming 2/4' – 'One Wonderful Day' – already exhibits wit and skill with its identity in the first two syllables. And in a song that revolves around the possibility of marriage, Sondheim sent up one of the best-known wedding melodies – the 'Bridal Chorus' from Wagner's *Lohengrin* – setting it to words that would be right at home in *Company*:

BOBBY

Don't do it, Gene.
Don't do it, Gene.
Love with a spouse is a household routine.
Then, when you're through,
What can you do?
Can't send a dame home
Who lives in the same home
As you!¹⁴

A more positive take on marriage – one that, like ‘Isn’t It?’ uses the stock market as a trope – comes in ‘Love’s A Bond.’ As with other lyrics in *Saturday Night*, ‘Love’s A Bond’ abounds in interior rhyme:

VOCALIST

Love’s a bond that’s pure.
 Its dividends are sure.
 This bond, if you get it,
 Is stable and yet it
 Will grow if you let it
 Mature.¹⁵

Another song, ‘Exhibit A,’ conjures up the lawyerly disquisition that Fredrik lays out in *A Little Night Music* (‘Now’). After detailing eight alphabetically organized ‘exhibits,’ A through H, that any enterprising young man will need to have at hand in order to have his way with his date by the end of the evening, including the scent of ‘new pine’ that will assist a fellow in getting his girl to become ‘supine,’ Bobby reviews the ‘evidence’:

BOBBY

A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-
 Rest my case!¹⁶

Other lyrics from this same time period show a similar virtuosity and *joie de vivre*. The second volume of Sondheim’s lyrics contains a sampling of birthday tributes, including two for Bernstein (1958 and 1988), one for Laurents (1998), and two for Harold Prince (1978 and 1993). The first Bernstein birthday lyric is a reworking of ‘You’re Only as Old as You Look,’ a 1955 song that Sondheim wrote for Jerry Beaty, Mary Rodgers’s first husband. The Bernstein version finds Sondheim twitting the birthday boy for his propensity to borrow other people’s music; it also has a sequence where the rhymes are so closely assonant that one might be excused from hearing them initially as near or false rhymes, which Sondheim decried as ‘the refuge of the destitute.’¹⁷

ss (Sondheim)

You’ve got more time to write more scores
 Whether somebody else’s or your scores,
 ‘Cause you’re only as old as you look
 And you look four scores
 Five
 Why, you’re practically alive. . . .

What great days have gone!
 All the debuts, the bravos, the bombs!
 And the time you took over the baton –
 From Brahms.¹⁸

The original version of the song to Beaty opens *Sondheim Sings*, Volume II. Also on the CD is a birthday tribute he composed a year before titled 'A Star Is Born.' A clear nod to the Garland film of the same year, Sondheim fêted the birth of a classmate's daughter by regaling the infant's father – a Williams classmate and an avid movie and theatre buff – with an avalanche of references so dense that, in his volume, Sondheim felt the need to provide a glossary for some of the more than seventy actors, movies, and studios he invoked:

ss
 Swanson sent a
 Pale magenta
 Mink-upholstered car,
 Rita Gam
 A silent Sam-
 Ovar,
 Oliv' de Havilland
 Sent some gravel and
 Half a ton of tile, cement and tar
 To pave the driveway round the home of our star.¹⁹

This concatenation of names provides an early example of the list song in Sondheim's hands; later list songs include 'I'm Still Here' (*Follies*), 'Please Hello' (*Pacific Overtures*), and 'Putting It Together' (*Sunday in the Park with George*). And while it was written for a private audience – Charles Hollerith, Jr.; his wife, Catherine; and their newborn daughter, Catherine Louise – undoubtedly others in Sondheim's orbit at this time would have had opportunities to hear these songs.²⁰

The scintillating wordplay found in *Saturday Night* and other contemporaneous songs and his emerging ability to define and describe character through his lyrics set Sondheim apart from other practitioners in his day. It is not by accident that Sondheim looked to Frank Loesser and *Guys and Dolls*, rather than Hammerstein or Alan Jay Lerner – *Brigadoon* (1947), *Love Life* (1948), and *Paint Your Wagon* (1951); *My Fair Lady* would come later (1956) – as a model for witty, acerbic, conversational lyrics at this moment in his career. The other men were poetic and romantic; Loesser

was a wisecracking New Yorker.²¹ And, like Sondheim, Loesser wrote his own music to his own lyrics. Except, unlike Loesser, nobody seemed drawn to Sondheim's music. The recordings give a hint as to why that might have been so. They open a window into Sondheim's piano technique. In a word: it was *formidable*.²²

'I didn't like your music'

Although it was composed after *West Side Story*, 'Pretty Little Picture' (*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, 1962; *Sondheim Sings*, Volume I: 1962–72) can illustrate what Sondheim might have sounded like when Laurents, Lane, Arlen, Bernstein, and others heard him sing his songs in the mid 1950s. For starters, the tempo of Sondheim's rendition (quarter note [q] = 120 to 126 bpm) is much faster than what has become the standard tempo, from Zero Mostel's performance to the present day (q = 106 bpm). Then Sondheim tossed off the Prokofievian 'wrong notes' as though there was no physical challenge whatsoever.²³ While there is an actual wrong note or two in his performance – for example, a G in the bass instead of an F at 1' 43" – the enthusiastic singing and playing, coupled with the fast tempo, result in a blockbuster performance.

One hears the same drive in his rendition of an early version of 'The Glamorous Life' (*A Little Night Music*, 1973). The piano playing sounds as though there is a second person sitting with him, but Sondheim executed both the piano playing and singing alone; the motoric accompaniment, the leaps into chords in the middle of the keyboard, and the shifts in meter are handled with vigor and aplomb. One hears an accomplished performer at work here, one for whom virtuosity seems to come with little effort.

I do not wish to oversell the pianistic facility found in the recordings. They represent only a selection of the recordings that Sondheim made, and one would presume that they were chosen for their fidelity to the songs and persuasiveness as performances. It is easy to imagine multiple takes of one song as he allowed the tape to roll, and those performances, filled with stops and starts and the inevitable clinkers, may one day yield their own thorough study. But these recordings give us a sense of what it must have been like to have been in the room where Sondheim, having spent the day preparing and practicing alone, auditioned his songs in order to interest potential producers and investors in his work.

In addition to the standalone songs ‘You’re Only as Old as You Look’ and ‘A Star Is Born,’ *Sondheim Sings*, Volume II: 1946–60 has two songs from *Saturday Night*. The first, ‘I Remember That,’ is in 32-bar song form (here AA’BA”) with an 8-bar extension of the final A section. It also features a 28-bar verse in which Hank recollects meeting Celeste for the first time, getting all of the details wrong, and a 10-bar reprise of the verse by Celeste, who corrects Hank. Sondheim’s playing closely resembles the published version, which is in the same key (C major) and, most importantly, contains the contrapuntal tenor voice in the piano part. In the introduction to the refrain, that voice sets up an oscillating figure that runs throughout the song; in the bridge, it traces a descending line that returns in the tag at the end; and this voice drives the modulation to the bridge, as the song moves to E major. In that transition to the bridge, the accompaniment also indicates that the left hand needs to cross over the right, which is playing the interior line at that point. This interior voice, preserved by the crossing of hands, resembles the piano writing in Rachmaninov, including in the second piano concerto – the first movement of which Sondheim performed²⁴ – and Sondheim has always been fond of counterpoint, which is evident in other moments in *Saturday Night*.

The melody for ‘I Remember That’ is more instrumental than vocal, with its repeated triadic arpeggiations climbing up the scale in the A sections: first C–E–G, then E–G–B, lastly G–B–D, all harmonized with a C major triad. And the tag features its own upward idea, as the melody, after hitting a high E, comes back down to a G as the stressed note, followed by an A and then a B, not unlike what one hears in the final A section of ‘The Trolley Song,’ sung by Judy Garland in *Meet Me in St. Louis* ten years earlier (1944; music and lyrics by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane). All in all, it is an accomplished traditional song that has elements that make it challenging to sing, slightly more difficult to play than a standard lead sheet (the published score does not provide chord figures), and less immediately memorable than the songs of Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern, which this song, with its modulation in the bridge, seem to hold as its models.

Berlin was especially fond of double songs, beginning with ‘Play a Simple Melody/Musical Demon’ from his 1914 musical *Watch Your Step* and continuing through to his last completed musical (‘Empty Pockets Filled with Love,’ *Mr. President*, 1962) and to the last major revival he oversaw (‘Old Fashioned Wedding,’ *Annie Get Your Gun*, 1966). Closer to Sondheim’s young adulthood – and its own bona fide phenomenon – was ‘I Wonder Why/You’re Just in Love’ from Berlin’s 1950 *Call Me*

Madam. The lovely, almost syrupy ballad sung by the male lead is touching, but once the real star of the show, Ethel Merman, cuts in with her jazzy counterpoint, the song enters a different stratosphere that is intensified when the two songs are sung in tandem. The song never failed to rouse the audience, and Merman and her male lead – one hesitates to call him a ‘co-star’ – often had to reprise the song as an instant encore.

‘In No Time at All/A Moment with You’ attempts to pay homage to this Berlin tradition, but it is a pale copy of what Berlin executed in 1950. Unlike the Merman showstopper, Sondheim’s song has a single pace: ‘Tempo di Fox Trot.’ And the recording of Sondheim singing this song in 1954 doesn’t fully realize the second song, making it difficult at this distance to determine how well the two lines work together. By the time the show was produced off-Broadway, the second ‘song’ became more of an echo of the first, taking over some of the wrong-note counterpoint in the piano part of the 1954 recording and setting that counterpoint to words.²⁵ And like ‘I Remember That,’ this song’s bridge is a modulator’s paradise, enharmonically going from D-flat major through F-sharp minor to E major and then to A major. The score retains the five-flat key signature as the music here is festooned with accidentals. Then a classic jazz tritone pivot sends the music from an A¹³ chord to an E-flat¹³ chord, then through the dominant of the original key back home to D flat major. One can think of ‘So in Love’ (*Kiss Me, Kate*, 1948, Porter) or ‘All the Things You Are’ (*Very Warm for May*, 1939, Kern; book and lyrics by Hammerstein) for other examples of modulatory excess on Broadway that Sondheim would have known and admired.

The title song for *Saturday Night* takes modulation, counterpoint, and climbing melodies to a dizzying height.²⁶ After Dino’s ragtime piano introduction in the key of B flat major, Artie strums three chords on his ukulele that place us on the doorstep of D-flat major. The first eight bars of the verse are in D-flat, but the second eight are jacked up to E-flat. They are followed by a harmonically unstable sixteen measures that, somewhat surprisingly, end with a return to E-flat major and the melody sitting on the sixth degree. Four measures in E-flat repeat the melodic figure that opened the verse, only to be cut short by Dino’s honky-tonk piano, now thrown into D-flat instead of B-flat. It sets up Artie’s three ukulele chords just fine . . . and then the music continues without preparation in F major for the song’s refrain (or ‘burthen,’ as Sondheim liked to call this section of a song, in homage to Kern).

The accompaniment thus far has had moments of contrast with the melody, but the refrain (a straight-up 32-bar song, in ABAC form) contains

the same kind of interior tenor line that was so prominent in 'I Remember That.' Its true contrapuntal potential, however, is revealed in its second appearance. After a return to the beginning of the song, the D-flat/E-flat/unstable harmonies/return to E-flat structure jumps to what is marked as the coda but is more a written-out version of the refrain repeat. This time, the snippet of the opening line of the verse is given its full eight bars (instead of four the first time), with the melody oscillating between $\hat{3}$ and $\hat{2}$ in E-flat, but midway the key changes to F, making the oscillation between $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{1}$. This static melody with a key change underneath is something Sondheim adopted from Ravel's Trio and String Quartet, deployed in the first movement of his piano sonata, and seen in the key change at the end of the bridge in 'Losing My Mind' (*Follies*). Here in 'Saturday Night,' with the music now in the key of the refrain, Sondheim pulls another compositional rabbit out of the hat: the melody of the A sections – which has the same stairstep quality found in 'I Remember That' – can be sung in canon at the unison with one bar separating each entrance, and the written-out repeat has four vocal lines as Ted, Ray, Artie, and Dino echo one another in lamenting their lonely plight on this particular Saturday night.

The stabbing wrong notes, the triadic and instrumental melodies, the insinuating contrapuntal lines, the modulatory harmonies, the energetic accompaniments: taken all together, Sondheim's songs exhibit an almost irrational exuberance, especially in comparison with what Loewe and Loesser and Berlin and Porter and Rodgers were offering on Broadway at the time. Only Arlen – Sondheim's favourite song composer – could come close to such musical audacity, and even he found it necessary to suggest to Sondheim that the young composer-lyricist tone down his exuberance.²⁷ Is it any surprise, then, that Laurents and others found Sondheim's music hard to digest? And Sondheim did little to help his cause by being such a polymath at the time. With Ayers's death and the subsequent shelving of *Saturday Night*, Sondheim would be known as a lyricist throughout the 1950s and for years thereafter.

Getting One's Goat

Sondheim knew in 1957 that, sooner or later, his music would arrive on Broadway, just as his lyrics had. And on Tuesday evening, 8 May 1962, when *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* opened, that day had arrived. It meant that Sondheim would receive his first professional

reviews for his work as a composer as well as a lyricist. This is what he heard as someone read Howard Taubman's *New York Times* review aloud at the opening night party:

George Abbott, who has been around a long time but surely staged nothing for the forum mob, has forgotten nothing and remembered everything. He has engineered a gay funeral sequence to a relentlessly snappy march by Stephen Sondheim. [Abbott] has used mixed identities, swinging doors, kicks in the posterior, double takes and all the rest of the familiar paraphernalia with the merciless disingenuousness of a man who knows you will be defenseless.

Mr. Sondheim's songs are accessories to the pre-meditated offense. . . .²⁸

Many talented hands fueled *Forum's* run of 964 performances, and yet Sondheim's contribution to the show was virtually overlooked: *Forum* won the 1963 Tony Award for Best Musical; *Oliver!* won the Tony that year for Best Original Score; Sondheim was passed over in that category.

Arthur Laurents would give Sondheim a second chance as composer-lyricist with *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964); it closed after all of nine performances. Sondheim's heyday would have to wait until the 1970s, when he started becoming the doyen of American musical theatre with *Company*, yet for another decade his lyrics bested his music in the eyes of many critics. By 1980, there was no question about who Sondheim was: the premier composer-lyricist of the American musical. Time will tell, when Broadway's musical theatre history is recounted seventy years hence, whether Sondheim is seen as the GOAT ('greatest of all time'). Whatever that critical judgment is, his greatness, fleetingly acknowledged in the 1950s and early 1960s, is no longer in doubt. In the musical theatre pantheon, there will always be a place for him.

Notes

1. Arthur Laurents, *Original Story by Arthur Laurents: A Memoir of Broadway and Hollywood* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 334. Bernstein was originally enlisted as part of the creative team but left when Jerome Robbins insisted on returning to the *Romeo and Juliet* musical.
2. As quoted in Craig Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.*, 2nd ed., updated (New York: Harper & Row, 1989), 11–12.
3. For more on the Sondheim papers at Wisconsin and other theatre luminaries whose papers also reside there, see Mark Eden Horowitz, 'Early Signs of Talent: Wisconsin Archives Reveal Sondheim's Youthful Evolution,' *The Sondheim Review* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 32–33.

4. Stephen Banfield, *Sondheim's Broadway Musicals* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 11–31.
5. Meryle Secrest, *Stephen Sondheim: A Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).
6. 'Music for the Theatre, the Young Copland, and the Younger Sondheim,' *American Music* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 80–101 (looks at Sondheim's senior-year term papers on Ravel and Copland and the influence of their sound worlds on his); 'Sondheim's Piano Sonata' (his senior thesis), *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 127 (2002): 258–304; 'Hindemith's Unexpected Grandson,' *Hindemith-Jahrbuch* 32 (2003): 215–34 (comparisons of Hindemith's style with the 1950 sonata, the Concertino for Two Pianos, 1951, and their choices of theatrical projects); *How Sondheim Found His Sound* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005; paperback, 2007); and 'Williams College before, during, and after Sondheim,' in *Sondheim in Our Time and His* (New York: Oxford, 2022), 15–44.
7. Finding aid (typescript), Stephen Sondheim (1930–) Papers, 1946–1965, University of Wisconsin, U.S. Mss 66AN: 1.
8. Stephen Sondheim, *Finishing the Hat: Collected Lyrics (1954–1981) with Attendant Comments, Principles, Heresies, Grudges, Whines, and Anecdotes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 25–26.
9. *Finishing the Hat*, 26.
10. Steven Robert Swayne, 'Hearing Sondheim's Voices,' PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1999: 339.
11. Sondheim, *Finishing the Hat*, 4.
12. *Finishing the Hat*, 5. Sondheim placed an asterisk by the first 'huh' in the lyric and noted: 'Brooklynese – "her" without the final "r" sound.' F. Richard Pappas, an attorney representing Stephen Sondheim, authorized the quotations from Sondheim's lyrics that appear in this chapter.
13. *Finishing the Hat*, 8.
14. Sondheim, *Finishing the Hat*, 13.
15. Sondheim, *Finishing the Hat*, 8.
16. Sondheim, *Finishing the Hat*, 10.
17. Sondheim, *Finishing the Hat*, xxv–xxvii.
18. Stephen Sondheim, *Look, I Made a Hat: Collected Lyrics (1981–2011) with Attendant Comments, Amplifications, Dogmas, Harangues, Digressions, Anecdotes and Miscellany* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 410.
19. *Look, I Made a Hat*, 406. The glossary includes only half of those mentioned; Sondheim assumed that some remained famous enough in 2011 not to need additional information, such as Garland, Lucille Ball, Olivia de Havilland, and Gloria Swanson. Others not glossed include Claudette Colbert, Ricardo Montalban, Anthony Quinn, Roberto Rossellini, and Norma Shearer. Also not glossed is Alexis Smith, who would go on to star in *Follies* as Phyllis Stone.
20. For information on the *Sondheim Sings* recordings, see the inside back covers of the CD liner notes. For more on the Ryans' contributions to Sondheim, see

Secret, 90 *et passim*. Ayers and Sondheim were groomsmen at the Ryans' wedding. D. D. was also the impetus for Kay Thompson to turn her cabaret song about a girl who lived in the penthouse of the Plaza Hotel into the *Eloise* series of books; see Douglas Martin, 'D. D. Ryan, Fashionable Godmother to "Eloise," Dies at 79,' *New York Times*, 29 July 2007, www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/nyregion/29ryan.html, accessed 7 September 2020.

21. *Finishing the Hat*, 6.
22. See 'A Bowler Hat' (*Pacific Overtures*) for the French pronunciation (*Finishing the Hat*, 328).
23. For more on 'wrong notes' being Prokofievian, see Richard Bass, 'Prokofiev's Technique of Harmonic Displacement,' *Music Analysis*, 7, no. 2 (July 1988): 197–214. www.jstor.org/stable/854056, accessed 27 May 2021.
24. Sondheim: 'I liked playing the piano part of the first movement of the Rachmaninoff C Minor [Concerto, op. 18], which I played in high school, toured, and gave recitals in Pennsylvania.' Personal communication with the author, 20 November 2001.
25. Sondheim would have greater success with counterpoint songs in future musicals: see 'Now/Later/Soon' (*A Little Night Music*); the cut combination of 'Rain on the Roof'/'Ah, Paris!/'Broadway Baby' (*Follies* and present in the vocal score); and, most successful of all, the quartet that sings 'You're Gonna Love Tomorrow'/'Love Will See Us through' (also from *Follies*).
26. The 2000 off-Broadway recording of 'Saturday Night' (on *Saturday Night*, Nonesuch 76902-2) is transcribed up a whole step from the published vocal score (*Saturday Night*, Hal Leonard, ISBN 0-7935-9576-2), which, while it has no publication date on it, was released in 1999. The score is marketed as 'vocal selections'; while it contains all of the songs from the musical, it does not contain the reprises of 'Saturday Night' and 'One Wonderful Day.' In my analysis, I will refer to the keys as they appear in the vocal score.
27. For Sondheim naming Arlen as his favorite composer, see *Finishing the Hat*, 222. Arlen had modest success on Broadway with *Bloomer Girl* (1944; 654 performances), *St. Louis Woman* (1946; 113 performances), *House of Flowers* (1954; 165 performances), and *Jamaica* (1956; 555 performances), but his star did not burn as brightly as the others mentioned here.
28. Howard Taubman, 'Theatre: "A Funny Thing Happened . . .",' *New York Times*, 9 May 1962: 47.