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"Side by Side by Sondheim" Is a Summer Pleasure

Posted by [Martha Keravuori and Chuck Gallet](#) • June 7th, 2015 • [Printer-friendly](#)



University Theatre at N.C. State will present "Side by Side by Sondheim" on June 7, 13, and 17-21 in Titmus Theatre in NCSU's Frank Thompson Hall as part of TheatreFest 2015 (photo by Ron Foreman)

Side by Side by Sondheim, presented by **University Theatre at N.C. State** as part of **TheatreFest 2015**, is a musical celebration of **Stephen Sondheim** material, formulated and developed by **Cleo Laine** and her husband, **John Dankworth**, in collaboration with **David Kernan**, **Ned Sherrin**, and **Cameron Mackintosh**. Its professional debut was in London's Mermaid Theatre in May of 1976. The first Broadway production was a year later.

Loosely constructed to allow music selection freedom to producers, the general movement is narration of Sondheim's remarks about the music and lyrics from his many works before each number. Here in Titmus Theatre in N.C. State's **Frank Thompson Hall**, the performers did the narrations as well.

The very talented ensemble consists of **Brent Blakesley**, **JoAnne Dickinson**, **Brian Fisher**, **Maigan Kennedy**, **Marisa Markoch**, **Areon Mobasher**, **Danny Norris**, **Linh Schladweiler**, **Sandi Sullivan**, and **Brett Williams**, simultaneously accompanied by musical director **Julie Florin** and **Julie Bradley** on grand pianos.

Selections are made from a variety of **Stephen Sondheim's** shows on stage, television, and films, including *Pacific Overtures*, *Dick Tracy*, *Company*, *Into The Woods*, *Follies*, *Gypsy*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *West Side Story*, *Anyone Can Whistle*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Sweeney Todd*, and even more, including, of course, his most favorite ballad "Send in the Clowns," from *A little Night Music*.

Director **John C. McIlwee** keeps a lively flow of sizzling repartee, followed by song and dance — steps

courtesy of choreographer **Viki Atkinson**. McIlwee designed the costumes, which were elegant black dresses and shoes (some sequined!) for the women and sophisticated tuxedos for the men, with one checkered vest.

The set — also the set for the luxurious hotel room of ***Born Yesterday*** (a part of the **TheatreFest** repertoire, continuing through June 14th) — is magnificent with a marble floor that is to die for and stunning columns, and is lighted to perfection by lighting designer **Joshua Reaves**. The overall effect is one of urbane polish, and the performances live up to the effect.

All performances were highly commendable, so choosing four outstanding ones is a tough chore; but Areon Mobasher's breathtakingly long note lingers in memory, and Brett Williams perkiness is a delight. Maigan Kennedy's spirit overflows, and Danny Norris's physical antics are a joy.

Our community eagerly looks forward to **TheatreFest** every year, and a joyful entrance into summer is brought to us again this year as entertaining and amusing as ever.

SECOND OPINION: *May 15th Raleigh, NC ArtsNow preview by Khushbu Gosai:*
<http://artsnownc.com/2015/05/15/preview-nc-states-theatrefest-2015/>.

University Theatre at N.C. State presents **SIDE BY SIDE BY SONDHEIM** at 2 p.m. June 7, 7:30 p.m. June 17-20, and 2 p.m. June 21 in the **Titmus Theatre** in Frank Thompson Hall, 2241 E. Dunn Ave., Raleigh, North Carolina 27607, on the N.C. State University campus.

TICKETS: \$18 (\$4.68 NCSU students and \$16 non-NCSU students, seniors 60+, and NCSU faculty and staff). **BOX OFFICE:** 919-515-1100 or <http://purchase.tickets.com/buy/TicketPurchase>.

SHOW: <http://www.ncsu.edu/theatre/theatrefest/index.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/events/769939663122773/>.

THEATREFEST 2015: <http://www.ncsu.edu/theatre/theatrefest/index.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/events/887032094677067/>.

PRESENTER: <http://www.ncsu.edu/theatre/index.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/ncstateuniversitytheatre>.

VENUE: <http://www.ncsu.edu/arts/thompson/index.html>.

MAPS/DIRECTIONS: <http://www.ncsu.edu/arts/mapsanddirections.html>.

OTHER LINKS:

Side by Side by Sondheim (1976 West End and 1977 Broadway musical revue):
http://www.mtishows.com/show_detail.asp?showid=000067 (Music Theatre International),
http://www.sondheim.com/works/side_by_side/ (Stephen Sondheim Society), <http://ibdb.com/show.php?id=7993> (Internet Broadway Database), and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Side_by_Side_by_Sondheim (Wikipedia).

Stephen Sondheim (New York City-born composer and lyricist): <http://www.sondheim.com/> (Stephen Sondheim Society), <http://www.sondheim.com/> (Sondheim.com), <http://ibdb.com/person.php?id=12430> (Internet Broadway Database), <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0814227/> (Internet Movie Database), and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Sondheim (Wikipedia).

John C. McIlwee (Raleigh director and director of University Theatre at N.C. State):
<http://www.ncsu.edu/theatre/staff/> (NCSU staff listing).

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Martha Keravuori is a life-long theater artist — an actress, director, and stage manager — in North Carolina, around the country, and overseas. She has a theater degree from UNC-Greensboro, and has been active in the arts in Raleigh for the past 40 years. Martha is the retired*

executive director of the **North Carolina Theatre** Conference. **Chuck Galle** returned to Raleigh last year after a 17-year absence. He was active in community theater for many years, and directed the troupe of maximum-security inmates at Raleigh's Central Prison known as the Central Prison Players. In New England, he performed on stage, on TV, and in films. He is the author of **Stories I Never Told My Daughter — An Odyssey**, which can be ordered on his website: <http://www.chuckgalle.com/>. Chuck Galle and Martha Keravuori review theater for **Boom! Magazine** of Cary. Click [here](#) to read more of their reviews for **Boom! Magazine** and [here](#) to read more of their reviews for **Triangle Review** and **Triangle Arts and Entertainment**.

Summary

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