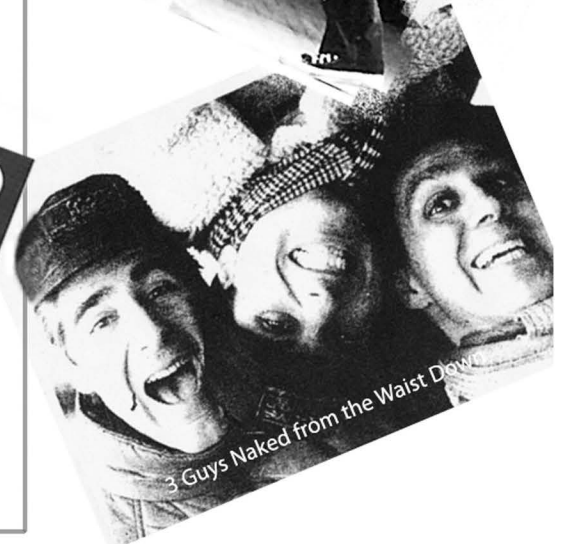
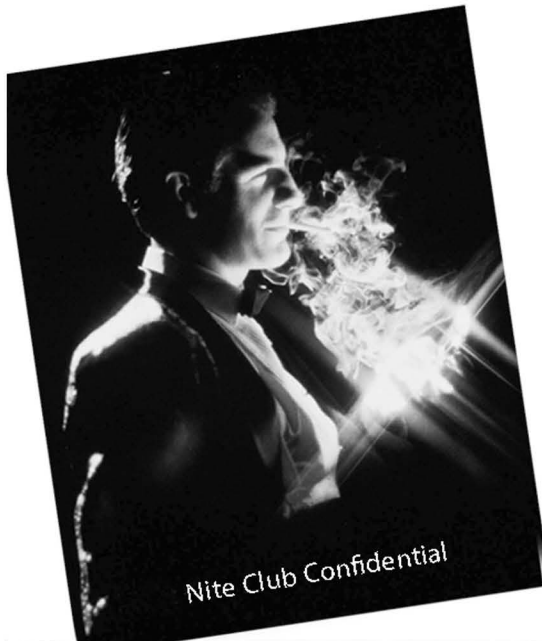


The Observer

From the Files of Project Quantum Leap



Promise of Greatness

Issue 35

July 2007

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ON OUR COVER

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Don Bellisario Moving on to Other Projects

In May CBS announced that come fall, Don Bellisario will no longer be in charge of his naval criminal investigative creation, *NCIS*, on a day-to-day basis, but will retain the title of executive producer. As *NCIS* begins its fifth season, longtime show collaborators co-executive producer Charles Floyd Johnson and series writer Shane Brennan will likely be taking over the show-runner duties.

The series regularly garners a spot in the Top Ten each week, despite its competition from *American Idol*, and is slated for syndication on USA in 2008.

Although Don's future plans haven't been announced, it likely will involve a couple of promised projects with CBS Paramount Network Television, and not Universal's long-speculated *QL*-spin-off for the Sci-Fi Channel.

Scott on *American Body Shop*

In June, Dave Wiemer, a long-time *QL*-fan, finally met one of his childhood heroes, Scott Bakula, while working on the set of *American Body Shop*, a new Comedy Central Network television series. The half-hour show, a partially-improvised parody of *American Chopper* (think Comedy Central's *Reno 911!* without the bullet-proof vests), premiered July 8 at 10:30pm. Scott's guest shot is set for August (so far no episode title available) and has been dubbed "hilarious."



Theorizing that I could meet one of my childhood heroes, I stepped into the frame of the camera... and smiled.

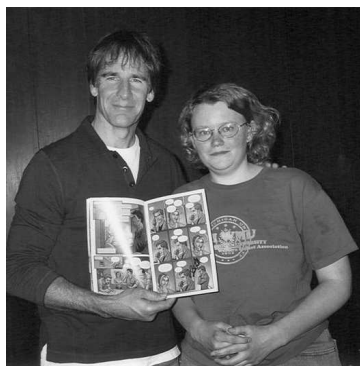
Great News from Deborah Pratt

Deborah Pratt revealed that she is creating an on-line story from her *Quantum Leap* script about Sammi Jo's search for her father, Dr. Sam Beckett. This is her gift to the fans, but she is also hoping that publishing this story on-line will create enough fan interest for a *Quantum Leap* movie to warrant a rethink on the part of Universal Studios. She assures us, "It's a hum dinger! As my dad used to say."

Despite some legal issues, Deborah is hoping to begin posting free chapters this fall, with a tentative title of *Quantum Leap Part 2—Time Child*. Watch the PQL website for updates. Deborah authored 22 scripts while co-producing *Quantum Leap*, including "Black on White on Fire," "Trilogy," and "8 ½ Months." Our recent interview with her begins on page 3.

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Scott Depicted in Barker Comic



PQL member, Jamie Phillips poses with Scott and her Clive Barker comic. The issue features Harry D'Amour, Scott's character in Barker's Lord of Illusions.



IDW Publishing did a 12-issue adaptation of Clive Barker's novel, *The Great and Secret Show*. The character of Harry D'Amour makes two small appearances, in issue #11 (published in March 2007) and issue #12 (published May 2007). When the comic was announced, several Barker fans wrote in requesting that Harry be based on Scott Bakula, and the publisher obliged. The comics sell for \$3.99 apiece, and are still available. Neither Scott nor Jay knew anything about this until Scott was shown the comic during the *No Strings Meet & Greet* in May. Scott was taken aback, but didn't really comment on the use of his likeness.

Jim Cartwright's *Quantum Leap* Poster

Jim Cartwright wrote to us about his *QL* poster, which he asked Scott to autograph during the Meet & Greet in May.



Jim told Scott that every time someone wanted to sign in the middle section, he would tell them that he wanted that spot for Scott's autograph. So Scott wrote, "Thanks for saving me a space."

I began getting into the autographing many years ago when I started going to conventions, mainly *Star Trek* conventions since these happen on a regular basis. I have many posters, but one of the jewels of my collection is the QUANTUM LEAP poster. I bought the poster at the first *QL* con, held at the Universal Sheraton on March 1, 1992. There were a lot of guest stars milling around during the show and I didn't have anything else for them to sign except the poster. That's how it started.

One of the first signatures on the poster belongs to Dennis Wolfberg, who played Gushie on the show. He was leaning against the wall just minding his own business when I approached him and asked him to sign the poster. He seemed to be amazed that I recognized him and was more amazed that I wanted him to sign the poster. He was gracious, talkative, and very nice.

Awhile later I was standing next to Eriq LaSalle and I mentioned to him that I really liked his acting in his *QL* episode. ("A Song for the Soul" had just aired that week.) I mentioned that if he kept up that caliber of acting, he would be big one day. When he signed my poster he wrote, "To Jim, Thank you for the compliment. Eriq LaSalle."

The poster has 25 signatures and counting. Some of the more notable names are: Scott Bakula (of course), Dean Stockwell, Richard Herd, Russ Tamblyn ("Thou Shalt Not", Neal McDonough ("Play Ball"), and Deborah Pratt.

But for me, one of the best experiences was when Scott put Sharpie to paper and finally signed the poster. I am eternally grateful to Scott and Jay for giving me an opportunity that I thought would never come.

Because the show ran for five years and had a lot of guest stars, whenever I see a listing for an upcoming autograph show or convention, I run the list of names of the various actors in attendance through Internet Movie Database. If a person has done a *QL* episode, I haul the poster to the show and get it signed. I usually ask the person sign "To Jim," their name and the character they played in the episode. I have one rule: All the signatures must be done in my presence; I am the only one who handles the poster. If I cannot make it to a show, I will not get the signature. The poster is too valuable to me to put into another person's hands. I know a couple of other people who I trust 100% (and love dearly) who will get autographs for me if I cannot attend a show, but the *QL* poster is just too precious to me. I will say this: Every person who has signed the poster has had nothing but wonderful things to say about working on the show. They praise Scott, Dean and the production staff. *Quantum Leap* stands out for them as one of the best experiences in their acting careers.

I first discovered *Quantum Leap* when the show premiered on NBC in 1989. I had seen Scott in a couple of other things before that and was happy to see that he was in a series. I had no idea that I would be totally hooked on the show for the entire run; I've never missed an episode.

INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH PRATT

By Jo Fox and Sharon Major

May 10, 2007

While we were in Los Angeles, Deborah Pratt, looking as beautiful as ever, agreed to meet us for lunch and discuss her debut novel, The Vision Quest.



JO: Hi, Deborah. It's so good to see you again. How have things been going with *The Vision Quest*?

DEBORAH: *The Vision Quest* has spurred some interesting blogging. People have now created characters that actually live in the world. I really want to create a whole interactive community.

JO: You talked about that several years ago.

DEBORAH: Yes. I've invited some people to create their own characters; the characters might live in Sangelino or Atlantia—they might even be Splicer—all in the virtual world. We are going to start posting their daily blogs of what it's like with their parents, etc. and those. We want people who have read the book to participate. Then we're going to pick one of the characters to bring into either the first television show or the third book and let them be part of it. I think entertainment is changing.

JO: Oh, yes.

SHARON: So there's a television aspect too?

DEBORAH: Yes, there's a television aspect. Out of the three books, I've actually created two television series, and a third that is a reality show. Since Laser goes off into his rite of passage, I thought "Wow," we could have a reality show in which people go through a rite of passage, but in a challenge to each other. It doesn't have to be an individual challenge like in the book; it could be a team. The beauty of it is I created it, I can change it.

JO: And there's Zoccor, (Zō-car) if I'm pronouncing it correctly, which is a team sport.

DEBORAH: "Zō-car." I haven't heard it pronounced that way; I like it. I think of it as Zoccer. (sounds like sock-air, but with a 'z')

JO: I like what you did with religion in the future.

DEBORAH: We put all religions into the computer and the computer decided what they had in common. We founded a Universal God that all could believe in.

JO: That's a thrilling aspect of this story and just makes a whole lot of sense.

DEBORAH: I'm glad you picked up on that. A lot of people are happy with that.

JO: A lot of arguments in the world today are over religion and if those arguments go away, maybe people will get along better.

DEBORAH: Yes! I think it took me three months just to analyze two key topics of the book. One was what to do with the human population; I knew I wanted to deal with the fact that we are genetically creating new species. So what happens to the human population? How many people would have to be killed off during the Great Quakes? And then the other aspect that I thought was so important – and I agree with you 100% – if we didn't have religions which say "I'm better than you are" because my religion says so, then we would eliminate one reason to fight each other.

SHARON: I can't remember who said this but the comment was concerning the people in the Middle East: When they love their children more than they hate each other, then there will be peace.

DEBORAH: Ooooo what a beautiful comment. That's an amazing comment and that's so very true. As long as you feel you can sacrifice your children in the name of God, how can there ever be peace? Or if you raise the kids to think it's okay to fight, and that these people are your enemy instead of people just like you are?

I have to watch the clock. I need to pick up Nicky from school.

SHARON: How old is he now?

DEBORAH: He is 15 and over 6' tall. I remember Troian crying once when she realized she wouldn't be as tall as me but I told her that if she wants to be an actress, she should be happy. There's nothing worse than towering over your co-star.

SHARON: Does Nicky want to go into acting too?

DEBORAH: No. He wants to create video games. Actually, he wants to play them but realizes he needs to go to college and have a career to support himself.

SHARON: Do you use your children as models for your book when you're writing a scene?

DEBORAH: No, but I use them as sounding boards. Nicholas has certainly been an advisor as to video games and *The Vision*

Quest. I think I've used conversations I've had with my kids in scenes. But no, not generally.

SHARON: So, is writing a book different from writing a script?

DEBORAH: Totally. Completely. I started writing the book and realized I was short-handing so much (as if it were a script) that I had to start over. In scripting you might write "restaurant interior—day; background chatter; cut to;" then the dialogue starts. Suddenly I had to paint every element. What I once could have put in a paragraph this small, now had to become three pages. You have to describe the smells in the restaurant, the way people dress, the atmosphere, whether they are nervous and all this other stuff. It took me a good two years to really have a consistent flow.

JO: Now that you mention it, I see a difference between the first part of the book and the second. The first part feels more like a script and the second part feels like you're really getting into the flow and grit of the story.

DEBORAH: In the first part of the book I had to set up the whole world and it's not easy. I really had to set up a hundred years of history. I had to build exactly what I wanted and that was very tough.

SHARON: As I read the book I felt as if I were actually watching it.

DEBORAH: I've had a couple of people say to me that this is a movie. Well, yes.

SHARON: J.K.Rowling (*Harry Potter*) is that way too. Her books are very visual.

DEBORAH: She is very visual. More people watch movies than read books. So why not shift the idea of what a book is? That's why I wound up publishing it myself. I didn't want to rewrite it to become a "book." I really wanted it to be something new.

JO: It is. I read a lot of science fiction and fantasy. I've belonged to the Science Fiction Book Club since college. *The Vision Quest* reads well. It's a good fantasy.

DEBORAH: Thank you. I've had a number of people say this isn't true science fiction. That's a problem for the publishers because they don't know how to market it. And I said well, it's a science-fantasy. Someone else just called it "visionary fiction." I've gotten some really interesting new terminology out of it.

SHARON: Did you have imaginary friends when you were a child?

DEBORAH: You know, I was very shy so I played a great deal by myself. I shared a room with all my sisters. One time my mother came in and found that I had taken the entire set of encyclopedias and built a mansion decorated with all of her threads and Kleenex to make a playhouse for my dolls.

When I would go out to play I would tell my girlfriend about a dream I had. If she was the first one I told about the dream (it would be rather simple, but) by the end of the day the dream

would be expanded and embellished. So I've always had a vivid imagination. And there were shows with Barbie and Ken, so I was an actor too.

SHARON: Is there a great age difference with your sisters?

DEBORAH: My two older sisters are 4 and 2 years older than me and my younger sister, Diedra, is 4 years younger so I was the middle child and off in my own little world even back then.

We thought Donna was going to be the writer, because she would put on plays and she would make us be in her plays. I was usually the horse. Deidra was the princess and Diane was the prince, but I was mostly the horse. We would use our dad's ties for reins and one time they pulled out my loose tooth and there was blood on my dad's tie. Mom said, "No more ties for reins!" We were all pretty creative. Donna was the writer and director, and she became a doctor. I was in the background, just imagining, so they were all quite surprised when I said I was going to Hollywood.

SHARON: Did you go to your sisters for resources on genetics?

DEBORAH: Donna certainly. She actually worked with me for a couple of years. Her specialty is *in vitro* fertilization, so she has a hands-on knowledge of genetics and splicing. She really pulled me into the "science fact" of the world. She's been a very good resource in the futuristic aspects of the book. In truth, the reason I came out to California 30 years ago was to do this book about what the future would be like. That's a long time ago. Universal almost bought it in the '90s. It's been germinating hard-core for 12 years, but about five years ago, I began to put pen to paper. First I created the bible and what happened to the world. It took a whole year to write from the present to 2070, writing year by year and creating what I thought would happen. And interestingly enough a lot of it is happening; so we'll see if we colonize the moon and go to Mars. I think the first part of the book is a little different from the rest of the book, because I wanted to get as much of that history into the book as I could.

SHARON: Do the characters talk to you and you have to write down what they say? Is it conscious craft or inspiration?

DEBORAH: Some of both. When I'm in a scene, I visualize it. I see the characters walking and talking. I see the movie, which is why I'm sure it translates that way. But when I'm in their heads, which is the beauty of a book, it's really just being with them and listening to their voices. How does it feel to be in that situation and lose your dad? How does it feel to be locked out of your country knowing that it's in danger and not being able to get back? What is the inner turmoil you go through? How do you find true love or have so much anger inside you that you can't get to it?

I wanted the book to explore these emotions from two directions. I find Five a fascinating character because emotions are so new to him that there aren't always words to express what he is feeling. And with Lazar Masta Poe is teaching him that he needs his emotions to get to his power, yet his emotions are the thing that's blocking him from his greatness. I think

that's so true with all of us. We are so powerful in the simplest of ways. There's that whole telepathic communication with all of us that we ignore.

A lot of spiritualists are picking up on the book and that's very exciting to me. There are several ideas that I want people to garner from the book. One is that we use only 5% of our brain. What is the other 95% of our brain doing? Maybe that 95% goes to precognitive thought, to telepathic communication, to telekinesis, to all these things that humans have been doing since the beginning of time. But our society says you can't do that; you're not special. I believe we are all special and that we have the ability to bend dimensions and to extend our reality to do just that. We don't need to pick up the phone to communicate with someone. I can do it through the power of thought. That's one of the underpinnings of this book: We are humans and we can all communicate. Why can't we change the reality of war, of hunger, of famine by thinking, and through a collective consciousness make it right? I think this is paradise; Earth is paradise. We've been given this incredible gift and we've forgotten how to use it.

JO: Do you think this telepathic communication is more prevalent with females, than among males?

DEBORAH: Well, I know I'm very close with Nick. I can tell from far away when he's stressed out and something is bothering him. I start to worry when he starts to worry. So I know I'm connected to him. I've been in relationships with people where I know there is a connection. So I don't know that it's true. We as women didn't have to go out to hunt and block out that kind of communication for millennium. We were able to stay and nurture and enhance those abilities. Whereas men had to shut them off, because those feelings might distract them from being attacked by a lion.

There's a book, I think it's called *The Alphabet Versus the Goddess*, and basically it said that women ruled the world for millennia and when the alphabet came into play, the act of physically writing with the hand unlocked the left brain. This shifted the whole manner of thinking. It made humans more aggressive. War, conquering, and domination came into play. It changed again with the movies. Now there is a visual image instead of a written image, and people are no longer seeing something left to right, left to right. And just as it changed when movies came into being, it changed again when computers came along. Now we are engaging both our left- and right-brains. In the computer generation, I think we will see much more sensitive and much more interactive, men and women.

If you look at how people communicate now, especially kids, they would rather talk through the computer than they would face to face. I think there's a reason for that. I think because we are running out of fossil fuels, I don't think we are going to be able to get to each other as readily. And I think this is going to be our key form of communication. Fossil fuels are going to run out, but governments and oil companies are not looking for alternatives and they are actually getting in the way of finding alternative fuels. We are still burning fuels, still generating heat, still polluting the air.

To go back to *The Vision Quest* book on this, my hope is that enough people read it, so that we start having weekly forums to help build *The Vision Quest* online and talk about how can we have a better world; let's explore it digitally, then let's see if we can make it into a reality.

This is all an expensive proposition. The hard part is deciding if I should put the money into the website, or if I put it into marketing the book instead. This is what makes it hard for me as a creator. We are also in discussions with Platinum Studios about making a graphic novel. Graphic novels are stunning and very expensive to make, but there is a strong following in many parts of the world, like Japan and France.

"Quantum Leap isn't a science-fiction series; it just has a science fiction element. It's a human series"—Deborah Pratt

SHARON: *Quantum Leap* has inspired so many fans to produce their own stories and novels in the form of fan fiction. As a writer, how do you feel about Leapers writing their own *Quantum Leap* stories?

DEBORAH: I think that's the evolution of entertainment. People have taken entertainment to heart on a very personal level. I think the reality shows are doing so well because anyone could be in a reality show. Why not embrace the idea of allowing the public to create product for entertainment? I specifically designed *The Vision Quest* with that in mind, and I'm asking people to come create a character—come live in my world. If your character is exceptional, let me find a way to integrate it into my stories.

JO: Isn't that, to a large extent, what killed much of the television entertainment industry? They closed their minds to people from the outside writing for the shows? There are a lot of creative people out there and if they had just taken some of those ideas, they wouldn't be rehashing the same tired plots over again.

DEBORAH: Well that's because they control them. It's all about control. If they could let go, it would come back to them hundreds-fold. I like the idea that the fans continue to create new storylines, that they keep the characters alive, and keep Sam and Al alive. When we went off the air, there were still thousands of stories to be told. I'm really proud of the fact that fans have said okay, what if? They have asked the questions and they've done the stories. The beauty of the website is there are forums now where you can put your story up, share it, discuss it and talk about where it can go. So yes, I believe in (fan involvement) whole heartedly and I believe it's the future of entertainment.

I tried to do Sammi Jo as a movie. I went to Universal and pitched them the idea. Out of the blue they turned it around and tried to make it a television series.

JO: Where did it go from there?

DEBORAH: They brought in a writer who had never written for the show, and I guess he worked with Don (Bellisario).

SHARON: I did an interview with Trey Callaway a few years ago. He had always been a *QL* fan. The network wanted to make Sammi Jo a teenager, which doesn't really jive.

DEBORAH: No. It doesn't jive.

SHARON: But in the end, Don okayed it and Universal bought the script, so it belongs to Universal now.

DEBORAH: I wanted Sammi Jo's story to be out there and I wanted Scott and Dean to be the crux of the movie. But the attitude (among movie producers) was that Scott and Dean aren't movie stars and they don't have mass marketability. I had an in to Julia Roberts; I thought she would make a fascinating Sammi Jo. She would go on an adventure to find her father. She'd be a very interesting character, but as a grown woman.

Once Scott and Dean are in a movie with someone like Julia Roberts and make a \$100M movie, there could be a spin-off. Otherwise they'll try to do what they did with *Magnum PI*. Don was trying to do a *Magnum PI* movie, but was told that Tom Selleck's not really a movie star. So the studio went to George Clooney. But George is a friend of Tom's and he said he couldn't do that to Tom, so it's been shelved.

That's why I wanted to launch the *QL* movie in a way I knew I could make \$100M, because I had a \$100M movie-star up there. She was the right age to track the story and she would introduce Scott and Dean so that the next movie could be theirs. If *The Vision Quest* goes, and I make the kind of noise that I think I can make, I can then go back to the studio and say this is the way it should be done. Since the studio owns Sammi Jo and me, I'm surprised they went to Trey or Trey went to them with the idea.

SHARON: They hired Trey.

DEBORAH: Whatever it was, it wasn't right for the Sci-Fi Channel. There wasn't enough Sci-Fi about it. Nobody understood that. I kept telling them that *Quantum Leap* is not a science fiction series. It's just not the science fiction genre. It's a human series. It's a better USA Network show than it is a Sci-Fi Channel show.

JO: I tuned in to *QL* from the very beginning. The reason I tuned in was the Sci-fi aspect; the reason I stayed was the human aspect.

DEBORAH: *Quantum Leap* isn't a science-fiction series, it just has a science fiction element; it's a human series. I think the reason we stayed with *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* was the human story. Once the humanity is lost in the grandness of the special effects, it loses its appeal.

JO: That's true for a lot of movies. The story gets lost in the bells and whistles. It should be the opposite. In *The Matrix* and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, the effects were there to help enhance the story, not the other way around.

DEBORAH: It's a shame when special effects (rein). I think it kills a movie. That's why it's important for me to do these as books. This way I can explore the characters and relationships. It doesn't matter what century we grow up in. We still have to deal with our emotions, our hormones and the death of a parent. I tried to write about universal themes.

SHARON: So you've already written the second book. Do you have a timetable as to when it will be published?

DEBORAH: As it stands right now, we've set it up so that the books come out one per year—so the second one will probably be out in January of next year. There will be a third book also. I'm also creating a bible that probably won't come out for awhile. It will be a companion book explaining: What is Zoccer? How is it played? What are archeops? So readers can really have an understanding of the books. The second book is called *The Odyssey*. Since Lazer has to get back home, I'm going to do a map of the world so readers can track where he goes.

SHARON: I like that idea. I hope it will be online so people can go online and print it out? I was wondering if Ethan Peck served as a muse for Lazer?

DEBORAH: I've known Ethan since he was six; he went to school with Troian. He has always been very charming and perhaps he did serve as a muse, since my first inclination was to write the main character as a girl. It's funny, but the young girls who have read the book all pull for Kyla, and they don't like Elana Blue. What do you think of Cashton?

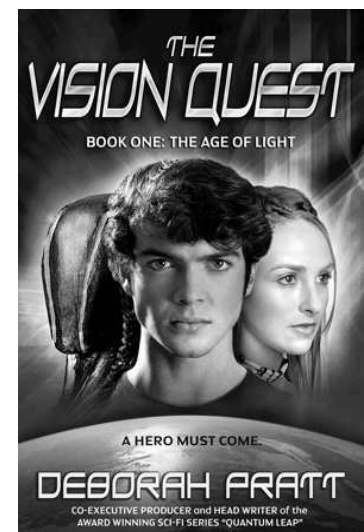
JO: I love him. He's a character-and-a-half. I love that half his inventions work and half don't, but he keeps right on plugging away there.

DEBORAH: I have to run pick up Nick. Did I answer your questions?

SHARON: Yes, and you've given us so much more. Thank you.

JO: It was great seeing you again, Deborah. Take care.

Ethan Peck, pictured on the cover of The Vision Quest, served as Deborah's muse for Lazer, the main character.

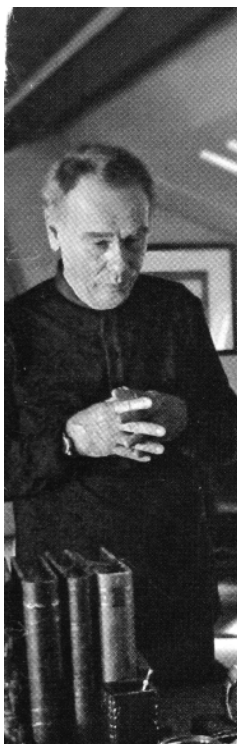


DEAN'S *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* BRIEFING

by Marla J. Hayes

Does everyone remember the original *Battlestar Galactica* TV series? It hypothesized that life on other planets would be experiencing the same war-like problems we have here on Earth. It focused on a journey for a rag-tag fleet of survivors; a journey to the fabled 13th colony—Earth. (It even made us feel Earth might be close to perfect, otherwise these survivors of interplanetary war would head to some other habitable planet.)

The new *Battlestar Galactica* that debuted in 2003 is not only grittier (it comes with a “viewer discretion” warning), it’s been technologically updated since the series of the late ‘70s. And for this version, the producers have changed the gender of one of the main characters—Lt. Starbuck (Katee Sackoff) is now a female. Oh, and those mechanical Cylons who turned against their creators? They now look as human as you or I, and not only can several “copies” exist at any one time, but each “copy” can be resurrected countless times, with each new version retaining the memories of its predecessor.

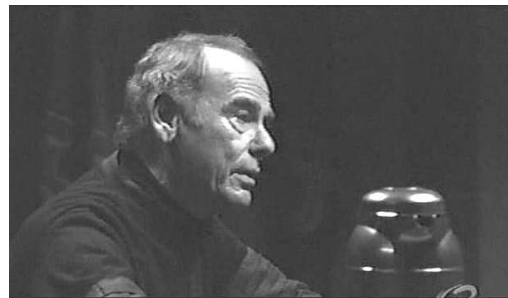


Got the idea? Dean’s character, Brother Cavil, is introduced in the two-part episode that wrapped up Season 2...

In *LAY DOWN YOUR BURDENS* (March 3 & 10, 2006), Brother Cavil first appears on the space-battleship *Galactica* when one of the officers, Chief Petty Officer Tyrol (Aaron Douglas), asks for religious counseling. Right from the start, Cavil’s cynical outlook is obvious.

Tyrol believes the Gods don’t hear the prayers of those from Caprica. In his own conniving way, Cavil gets the Chief to admit he had beaten up his girlfriend, Crewman Specialist Cally Henderson (Nicki Clyne). Cavil quips that the ministry is called “the pray trade.”

Cavil’s voice becomes hypnotic, as if he’s trying to convince the Chief that his dreams are the result of an obvious desire to kill himself before he realizes he’s really a Cylon. (The Chief is not—as far as we know, anyway). Cavil says, “Human beings do terrible things all the time.” Before he leaves the counseling room, Cavil actually gives some spiritually-comforting, frank advice.



Brother Cavil is then seen praying with Caprica’s President Roslin (Mary MacDonald) on her ship just prior to her election debate with opponent Gaius Baltar (James Callis).

Then, down on Caprica, Brother Cavil, clad in out-door gear, unexpectedly shows up among the soldiers after the Cylons give up their hold on the decimated planet.



We now realize that Cavil is a Cylon. How else could he have been counseling Tyrol on *Galactica*, praying with the President on her ship, and now among the soldiers on the planet?

Tyrol comes to the same conclusion when a rescue ship from the planet arrives in the bay and he sees this other Brother Cavil step out.



Upon locking up the two Cavils, both end up in neighboring cells.





Cavil #2 has come with a message—the Cylons now feel that the occupation of the colonies was an error, as was the pursuit of the fleet. *Galactica* is being given a reprieve. Cylon and Man will go their separate ways.

The Cavils don't believe in a God or the Gods of Kobol. They expound that the Cylons fell prey to their own beliefs that they were the children of Man. The Cavils say they're machines and should act that way.

The episode wraps as Roslin loses the election. The fate of this pair of Cavils remains a mystery. They weren't heard from or seen again.

Season three begins with the episodes OCCUPATION and PRECIPICE (original air date for both October 6, 2006). A year has passed, and the humans have been living on New Caprica under Cylon occupation. Col. Saul Tigh's wife, Ellen (Kate Vernon), is seen seducing one Cavil to try and get him to release her husband from detention. Simultaneously another Cavil carries a chair into Saul's cell. He's there to tell him he can go free, but he takes great pleasure in taunting him right up to the moment of his release.



Col. Saul Tigh (Michael Hogan) is vulnerable to Brother Cavil's ridicule

Later, in a Cylon council meeting, another two Cavils speak out against humanity. One Cavil says that he sees their mission as bringing the word of God to the humans. He wants to do it by creating more fear in their hearts and minds. He gleefully suggests executing the humans'



newest president, Gaius Baltar; then, he offers another alternative—rounding up leaders of the insurgency and randomly taking people off the street and executing them

publicly. His plan is to reduce the human population to a more manageable size—less than 1,000. The others in the council reluctantly agree to having the New Colonial Police (the NCP are humans working with the Cylons) round up people to go into detention.



One Cavil supplies the trucks for the NCP to fill. After several suicide bombings, Cavil vehemently says, "It's time for stronger measures." There's a list of 200 names of people who he wants taken in the night and executed at a gravel pit. This Cavil is instrumental in having President Baltar sign that order.

Meanwhile, the other Cavil is once again availing himself of Ellen's sexual favors. When he's finished, his civility leaves. He demands that she provide specific information on the insurgents or he will have Saul detained again, and this time he'll be killed.

EXODUS (A two-parter airing October 13 & 20, 2006) picks up with one of the Cavils in the front seat of one of the trucks that are carrying people to their deaths. He orders the trucks to stop for five minutes so the prisoners can stretch their legs.



How cruel is his deception. Cylon soldiers appear to execute the people as Cavil hides behind the truck, unaware that bullets will fly from that side too.



But it's actually a *Galactica* rescue mission.

Brother Cavil is shot in the battle. He tries to get a gun and kill himself, but he's left to die.



Later, on President Baltar's ship, a new version of Cavil tells how his previous version managed to finally shoot himself. This is Cavil's third download and each one hurts him more. He's not a fan of the Cylon resurrection process.



THE EYE OF JUPITER (December 15, 2006) finds both humans and Cylons alike preparing to do battle over a new planet. Tyrol seems to have discovered the "Eye of Jupiter," which may show the way to Earth, and the Cylons are keenly interested. Harvesting of the edible algae is underway on the planet as four Cylon Baseships approach the fleet. They ask for a meeting with Admiral Adama (Edward James Almos) aboard *Galactica*. One of the Cavils is among the three Cylons who comes to talk.



His sarcasm borders on evil when he sees Sharon "Boomer" Valerii (Grace Park) in her *Galactica* uniform. "We come in peace," he says, not meaning it in the least. Cavil tries to tease information out of reinstated-Madame President and Adama about the temple artifact that Chief Tyrol has found. He offers to throw Baltar in with the deal. Cavil has little or no conscience in his determination to get exactly what he wants.

On the Cylon Baseship, Cavil sums up the situation. He wants to take this opportunity to rid the universe of the 'human pestilence' and take down *Galactica* for good. The other Cylons at the meeting give him permission to annihilate the humans, but only once the Eye is retrieved.



Just as the Cylons detect the opening of *Galactica*'s six of nuclear firing tubes, Cavil insists it is merely a bluff.

To prove his point and to save his fellow Cylons, in RAPTURE (January 22, 2007), Cavil travels to the planet with President Baltar and the Cylon, D'Anna (Lucy Lawless), in order to retrieve the Eye of Jupiter. Cavil, looking very Indiana-Jones-ish, rushes into the temple and disarms all the explosives that the *Galactica* crew has left behind.



In a tense standoff, Cavil questions D'Anna as to why she's at the temple and what she's really looking for. He must stop her from looking upon the faces of the final five human forms the Cylons will adopt.



As he takes aim to shoot her, Baltar shoots him first.

The last scene lulls us into a false sense of Cavil having softened as he helps the latest resurrection of D'Anna come into their world, almost comforting her as he tells she'll never have to go through this again. But fear not, Cavil is still hardcore evil. He explains that her Cylon line and all her memories are going into cold storage indefinitely. He has no qualms whatsoever about unplugging her rebirthing chamber, and he walks away without looking back.

Where will Cavil show up again? We'll just have to keep watching. Until next time...

PROMISE OF GREATNESS

SCOTT BAKULA'S THEATRE CAREER - PART 3

By Sharon Major

With the close of 1983 only a ghost light, keeping its vigil, remained at the Minskoff Theatre. *Marilyn: An American Fable's* brief run had been disappointing; the show racked up only a month of previews and two weeks of performances. Nevertheless Scott's portrayal of Joe DiMaggio afforded him a leading role in a Broadway show, plus several wonderful duets and solos on a huge stage with a full orchestra. In the process, he had spent most of the year immersing himself in the part. Except for Jesus in *Godspell* (taken cumulatively), he had never before invested so much time into one character. But no actor devotes himself solely to one role at a time.

Off-stage work

There are many opportunities within New York City for working actors who find themselves between legitimate stage productions—industrial shows and advertising are only two. Nowadays an industrial often means a short film produced and sold to businesses, for corporate or motivational training. But during the early '80s, industrial shows commonly meant events, such as conventions or trade shows, where performers are hired to appear and in the process make valuable contacts. Scott did one such industrial show for Waldenbooks shortly after *Marilyn: An American Fable* closed, and there he met Keith Herrmann, who would later co-write (with Barry Harman) *Romance, Romance* and remember Scott for the leading man.

Advertising too draws upon the skills of the numerous performers available and provides lucrative paychecks.



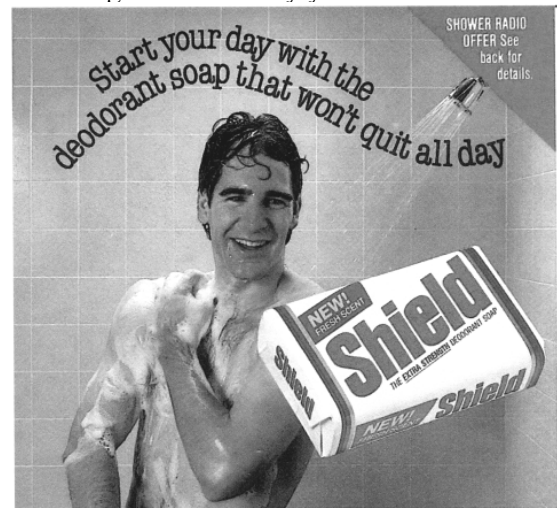
During these years, Scott appeared in at least four television commercials: Thomas' English Muffins; Folger's coffee ("The best part of waking up..."); a brief walk-on in an ad with Bob Uecker for Bud Lite; and a more substantial part in one they called "Spring Dance" for Canada Dry Ginger Ale.



"Spring Dance"

Later Scott would laughingly explain that the last one "was right around the time Michael Jackson was doing all of his triangle choreography. I was the lead guy, dancing and singing my way through the madness."¹

While there certainly may have been more, to my knowledge only one print ad—for Shield soap—has surfaced during the last twenty years:



Broadway Babylon: The Musical That Never Was

Having just come from a leading role in probably the most expensive flop of 1983, how appropriate (or ironic) for Scott's next stage appearance to be a revue of show tunes that had only the briefest acquaintance with a Broadway stage. After two previews, *Broadway Babylon: The Musical That Never Was* opened at the

Paper Moon Cabaret on May 18, 1984, and ran Fridays and Saturdays through June 9.

Conceived by Christopher Adams and David Agress, the show featured 21 songs from 17 Broadway shows. Some songs had been cut from popular shows before opening, while others were barely remembered from shows with less-than-stellar runs, and a few came from one-night wonders. The revue was directed and choreographed by Susan Stroman, with minimal accompaniment from an upright piano and drums. It starred a trio of Broadway veterans: Melinda Gilb, Josie de Guzman (who previously appeared with Scott in *Hello, I'm Not in Right Now*, Observer #34), and Scott.

All three performed “superbly,” in “up-tempo numbers, individual solos and character pieces.”² Scott’s solos included “10 Percent”—cut from *Chicago*—which is “a wicked working over of theatrical agents,”³ and a tender rendition of “Once Upon a Time,” (a staple in the repertoires of numerous vocal artists, including Robert Goulet, Tony Bennett and Frank Sinatra).



Photo by Dan Strickler

Melinda Gilb displays “humor and vaudevillian flair” while Scott provides the charm

While all three were hailed for their first-rate vocal abilities and showmanship, remarks about Scott were particularly kind. “Scott Bakula gives another impressive performance and he’s far better than any of the songs he’s given to sing...Considering what he can do with some of the songs he’s been given makes me long to hear him belt out a few showstoppers.”⁴

Accentuate the Positive

Revue is always a staple of the off-Broadway and nightclub scene, but *Accentuate the Positive* was more than just filler. Johnny Mercer’s lyrics are part of our American vernacular, and it is only fitting that many tributes have come his way as reimbursement for the pleasure he brought his own era and generations to follow. On Sunday, November 18, 1984 at The Bottom Line in New York City, an ensemble of five wended its way through a sampling of popular songs that Mercer helped create.

Demonstrating that Mercer’s lyrics could run the gamut from sentimental to hip and modern, the evening’s fare was grouped into extended medleys with a wide variety of topics—“Mercer Country” (Mr. Mercer’s bucolic lyrics), ‘Mercer of the Movies’ (some of his Hollywood songs), and ‘Johnny in the Jazz Age’ (swing songs).⁵ It also took a wistful look at one of Mercer’s favorite themes—trains and the memories they conjure up. Arranged by Musical Director John Simon, the songs and snippets were so skillfully strung together or melded contrapuntally, that the performers seamlessly sang and danced their way through the cavalcade of songs. The well-balanced company—Scott, Beth McVey (*Magic to Do*, Boston, *Day by Day*, D.C.), Milton Craig Nealy, Mary Testa (*Marilyn: An American Fable*) and Liliias White—provided “workmanlike”⁵ performances under the direction of Robert Nigro (*Is There Life After High School?*) and choreographer David Fredericks.

Born in 1909 in Savannah, Georgia, Mercer (whose father owned a real-estate investment company) had a privileged childhood. It seems that Johnny was the only member of the family with any musical inclination; he wrote his first song when he was fifteen while attending a private school in Virginia. When real-estate values bottomed out in 1927, his father lost all of the family’s money to investors. So at the age of nineteen, Johnny left for New York to “make it.” Within two years he had sold his first song and was hired as a singer/songwriter for the Paul Whiteman’s Kraft Music Hall radio show. In 1933 with Hoagy Carmichael, Mercer had his first hit record, “Lazybones,” and from then on he was writing with all of the big names on Broadway.

In 1935 Hollywood beckoned, and he and his wife, Ginger, moved west so that he could write for the movies. Eventually he would contribute to 88 films, writing such memorable classics as the Oscar-nominated “Blues in the Night,” and the Oscar-winning “On the Acheson, Topeka and Santa Fe.” Who but Mercer could rhyme Sante Fe with “Phila-del-phi-aye” or take a bit of dialog from a John Wayne movie—jeepers creepers—and turn it into an American idiom? Irving Berlin once wrote of his friend and colleague “(Mercer) had a good education and so he’s literate enough to know all those six- and seven-syllable words—but, and this is important, he’s smart enough to know when not to use them.”⁶ The popularity of “Autumn Leaves,” “Moon River” and “Days of Wine and Roses” in the early ‘60s showed that Mercer could hold his own in the new pop-music landscape created by rock & roll; his last Oscar nomination came in 1971 for “Whistling in the Dark.”

While reflecting the mood of the mid-twentieth century, Mercer’s catalog of over 1000 songs will surely survive into the new millennium. Remember Scott’s character

Peter Hunt crooning “Come Rain or Come Shine” into Murphy Brown’s ear? Yep, Mercer’s lyrics again. And the song, “Accentuate the Positive” (from 1944) was already a classic when Sam Beckett walked into Al’s Place on August 8, 1953 and heard it playing on the radio.

More than just a lyricist, Mercer was a savvy businessman too; he helped found Capitol Records and became its first president. Within three years, Capitol was producing one-sixth of all recordings in America. In 1976 Mercer died following surgery for a brain tumor, and in 1982, Ginger, his wife of 45 years, established a non-profit foundation in his name, ensuring his legacy.



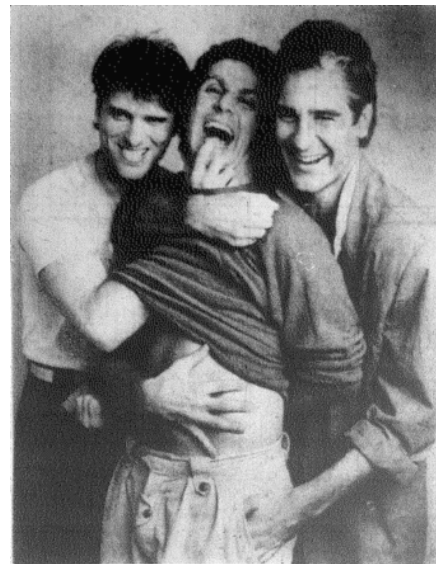
A commemorative U.S. postage stamp was issued in 1996

In this revue Scott contributed to most of the medleys and vignettes, and with over 60 songs, each of the five performers had their share of solos. Among Scott’s solos were: “When the World Was Young,” “Anyplace I Hang My Hat Is Home,” “The Afterbeat,” “Blues in the Night,” “Out of This World,” “Fools Rush In,” “Satin Doll,” “A Rock in a Weary Land,” and a falsetto-voiced stanza of “Have You Got Any Castles.” Near the end of the show—over a soft and mellow accompaniment of “Moon River”—each performer expresses thanks to Mercer for his endowment to American music. I can well imagine Mercer having a front-row seat in heaven, his gap-toothed grin in evidence throughout.

This sort of revue seems well-suited to the Bottom Line, which usually had two shows a night, filling its 400 seats and leaving standing-room-only at the bar. There was a short intermission (presumably for last call) and the show ended with a brief encore: the quintet singing (and letting patrons know) it’s time to “Hit the Road to Dreamland.” It seems a shame that (according to the newspaper ads) this particular show may have only been performed for three nights, through Tuesday, November 20. Although Scott believes it ran longer, there is no evidence that it moved to another venue.

3 Guys Naked from the Waist Down – North Carolina, New York City and Los Angeles

Only rarely is an actor able to originate a character for a New York stage. It’s been Scott’s fortune to have had two—Joe DiMaggio and Ted Klausterman. In between *Broadway Babylon* and *Accentuate the Positive*, Scott’s first reported appearance in the role of Ted came in a tryout of *3 Guys Naked from the Waist Down* for PlayMakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, from September 8, 1984 until Septemeber 23. However, Scott’s involvement—starring in this full-fledged musical—actually began with a couple of workshops earlier that year, on the heels of *Marilyn: An American Fable*.



Jerry Colker, John Kassir and Scott Bakula in “Three Guys Naked From the Waist Down,” to play Sunday through Sept. 23 at Paul Green Theatre.

Cast photo from The Daily Tar Heel, campus newspaper for Univ. of N. Carolina

Jerry Colker originally conceived the idea for *3 Guys* when doing a show at Kennedy Center called *Swing* with Michael Rupert and Paul Schierhorn three years before. After the show closed, Colker wrote a draft about their backstage silliness, including lyrics for a couple of songs. He showed it to Rupert, just to get his opinion, and surprisingly Rupert came back with the music for one of the songs—“I Don’t Believe in Heroes Anymore.” “I didn’t even know (Rupert) wrote music, and here I am, running around all over town meeting with composers.”⁷

Scott was in the first round of auditions, originally going out for Phil Kunin, but was turned down. However, as the role of Ted Klausterman was refined, Bakula fit the bill, and became part of the show from then on. When the actor originally cast as Phil suddenly dropped out prior to the fall tryout, Colker himself accepted the role.

It was easy enough; he had written the part with himself in mind. The third guy, John Kassir, a recently-named *Star Search* winner with a background in street theater and mime in New York City, plays Kenny Brewster, bringing his own personal standup, pantomime, and ventriloquism skills to the stage.

Thus the years of hard work by Jerry Colker, who wrote both book and lyrics for the show, and first-time composer Michael Rupert, who provided the jazzy/rock-inspired score, finally paid off as *3 Guys Naked from the Waist Down* opened at the Minetta Lane Theatre (an off-Broadway house in the West Village) on February 5, 1985. Off-Broadway is just the right venue for presenting a show that's trying to make a statement. Plus, with costs for Broadway productions soaring, the producers were able to bring *3 Guys* to the 400-seat Minetta Lane for a lot less money, realize sell-out performances, and achieve the desired intimacy of a comedy club.

Here the comedy club atmosphere is merely a backdrop. Andy Cadiff, the show's director, was Colker's classmate at Harvard and came on board during the initial stages. "I'd decided right away the most important thing about the show is that the audience must really feel they're in a comedy club—and feel it as authentically as possible."⁷ Although it is staged, the end result must look "spontaneous, unexpected and consistently on the edge,"⁸ informally engaging the audience as much as possible.

Adding authenticity to the clubroom atmosphere, Musical Director Henry Aronson and his seven-piece band are located on a platform rear center-stage, visible to the audience throughout. The use of projections (here on three screens) provides excitement to the expository dialog. By keeping the action in high gear, there is a feeling that the energy on stage is non-stop.

The only cast members are three guys: Scott as Ted Klausterman (a 'hellava guy'); Jerry Colker as Phil Kunin (an 'angry guy'); and John Kassir as Kenny Brewster, (a deeply disturbed, but uniquely talented guy), masterfully playing three stand-up comics. By the way, "the title is backstage argot for a stand-up comic, not a porno reference."⁹ It refers to the fact that a successful standup routine originates from the comedian's personal experiences; each time he takes the stage he must expose his inner psyche. However James B. Freydburg, one of the producers, insists that it's "not a musical about stand-up comics at all. It's a musical about striving for success and the compromises we have to make to get there...And in that sense, *3 Guys* is about everyman."⁷

Presented in two acts, the action begins in a comedy club, with Ted as MC, singing and playing the piano, making jokes, and adlibbing with the band. As Phil Kunin is introduced and begins his comedy routine, he is quickly upstaged by Kenny Brewster's off-beat

pantomimes and ventriloquist bits. Ted has the brilliant idea to mold the threesome into a comedy team. Phil's protest that he "don't wanna be no superstar" is pure sarcasm. Superstardom is exactly what they both want.

In Act 2, with reluctant Kenny on board, the three become instant celebrities on *The Johnny Carson Show* performing "The American Dream" as they sing their way through three decades of pop music: from Jerry Lee Lewis, to Bob Dylan, and finally the Bee Gees. Fame rapidly follows as the three guys reach the pinnacle of their careers in a television sitcom as Los Angeles undercover detectives in drag, which they promote on a world tour. The whirlwind international success is revealed through voiceovers and projections, and as the trio ends up in Las Vegas, the audience is finally regaled to the three guys, each dressed in a floor-length, fully-fashioned red-, white-, or blue-sequined gown.

As they rise in popularity, Ted must continually convince Phil and Kenny that the team must remain together. Finally he assures them that they can make a film with material of their own choosing, which they ultimately call "*3 Guys Naked from the Waist Down*." After the film's disastrous box office receipts, Kenny is unable to cope with the rejection; he sings of his "dreams of heaven" to Steve, his ventriloquist-dummy and alter ego. Leaving Steve behind, Kenny exits the stage and we know his gruesome dream has been tragically realized.

Then there is Phil. His image of stardom changes when he becomes a father. Pursuing a career is no longer the end, but only the means, to provide for his family—his true purpose in life. In "A Father Now," (abbreviated onstage; complete in the cast recording), Phil gazes upon his son and sings,

Our hearts are filled with dreams/..

The time for better times has come.

Recognizing that his new dream is his family, Phil is no longer hesitant about compromising himself for television success.

And Ted? Realizing Kenny is gone, Ted sings the cathartic ballad, "I Don't Believe in Heroes Anymore." While it certainly expresses his pain and disillusionment, in the end he sings:

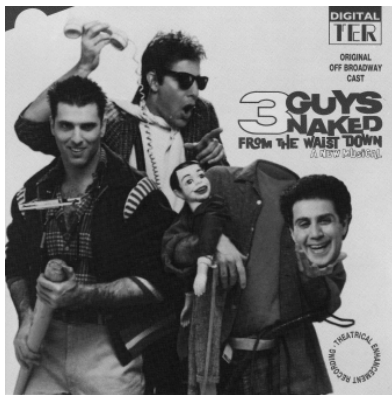
Except when I read books and dream/
I don't believe in heroes anymore.

Grasping at a hero, even if it's only make-believe, preserves Ted's sanity and we find him back where he started—as an MC in a comedy club; but now it's his own club called Klausterman's. He's back in his element: singing, bantering with the audience and the band upstage, introducing new comics to the club and displaying his "Promise of Greatness." Describing his

character, Scott calls Ted “the eternal optimist” who “lands on his feet, but loses both of his best friends in the process...I think Ted is saying at the end of the show, ‘It’s okay to dream, and it’s okay when the dreams don’t work out. Sometimes the price is higher than you’re willing to pay, but life does go on.’”¹⁰

The show drew critical acclaim for its ideas and performers: “Although this is a book show with songs, mostly set to a rock beat, it is the prevailing air of spontaneity and informality that gives it zip.”¹¹ “The show vibrates with the unbounded energies of its three-man cast. In addition to the intriguingly off-beat personality of Kassir, Scott Bakula, a song-and-dance man with affable leading man looks, has an unquenchable effervescence, and Colker himself, while a bit too fierce to ever be a comic, cavorts commendably through the musical numbers.”¹² “Bakula is a musical comedy find: leading man good looks,..good comic timing, and a strong singing voice.”¹³

Drama Desk Award nominations were plentiful. Jerry Colker won for Outstanding Book and was also nominated for Outstanding Lyrics, Rupert was nominated for Outstanding Music, Michael Starobin for Outstanding Orchestration, and the show was nominated for Outstanding Ensemble Performance. While it isn’t a true award, the annual theater reference book *Best Plays* cited John Kassir as one of the best actors in a primary musical role.



CD cover photo by Stan Fellerman

Kassir, Bakula and Colker—3 Silly Guys

After 20 previews and 160 performances, the show closed on June 30, 1985. Not unlike his character Ted Klausterman, Scott headed to the west coast and began making the transition to screen roles. By the end of 1985 he had completed work on “I-Man” for the *Disney Sunday Night Movie* (airdate April 6, 1986) and was getting offers for pilots, a couple of which (*Designing Women*, *Gung Ho*) would make the cut the following fall.

It is not known whether the producers were able to recoup their estimated cost of \$500,000 before closing, but even with three new “very funny guys,” the show seems to have retained its vitality and went on to many other venues. Andy Cadiff went on to direct productions in Toronto, Canada and Copenhagen, Denmark.

Finally after two years, *3 Guys* reached the west coast for one week in March 1987. Eight performances from March 17-22, 1987 reunited the original three guys—Scott, John and Jerry—who recreated their roles in a concert version at the Pasadena Playhouse. Once again Andy Cadiff directed and Musical Director Henry Aronson served as the “bandleader.” Employing only four musicians—reeds, trumpet, percussion and bass—Aronson managed, with only half the number of musicians as the original, to ably replicate the score.

Although it was initially conceived and billed as a concert version, it actually developed into something more. “Only the songs and a few routines were originally scheduled, but what Pasadena finally brought here is everything from the original but the scenery, *plus* a few new gags...Ted Klausterman is the rank amateur opener. While we gaze longingly at the Pasadena’s EXIT signs, Klausterman’s microphone screeches with each hideous pun. But then his act takes a subtle twist...[And once the show is underway], “It’s obscenely funny, an orgy of dangerous lunacy.”¹⁴

As it turns out, L.A. isn’t such a scary place after all. Scott’s screen career was on its way and Andy Cadiff also stuck around. One of Cadiff’s first directing opportunities came on *Eisenhower & Lutz*, helping him launch a very successful television career that also includes three episodes of *Quantum Leap*. (“So Help Me God,” “A Hunting We Will Go,” and the musical episode “Glitter Rock.”)

Nite Club Confidential – Los Angeles and Boston

Unlike the role of Ted Klausterman, Buck Holden in *Nite Club Confidential* was already a fully-formed character when Scott took the reins and infused new life into the part.

In January 1986, Scott and wife Krista Neumann packed up 2-year-old Chelsy and completed their move to Los Angeles. When you are new in town, where better to feel at home than on a stage in a musical once again? But instead of alternating stage work and babysitting duties as they had done in New York, both Scott and Krista took starring roles in the west coast debut of *Nite Club Confidential*, as Buck Holden and Dorothy Flynn respectively.

Nite Club Confidential was first conceived by Dennis Deal in 1982 as a spoof of the 1950s-era noir and cabaret, when “dressing up for the evening”¹⁵ was still expected. He originally had Kay Thompson—the top club attraction in the ‘50s—and the Williams Brothers in mind, but Thompson’s persona was “untouchable.” So he named his chanteuse Kay Goodman, dubbed her backup singers the High Hopes, chose a lightweight B-movie plot, and placed emphasis on the songs to tell the story. After off-off Broadway tryouts at Van Buren’s in 1982 and the Riverwest Theater in 1983, the musical opened off-Broadway on May 10, 1984 at the Ballroom Theater. As in *3 Guys Naked*, which reflected the comedy club atmosphere, the Ballroom—an actual nightclub—was the perfect setting for a show about nightclub singers.

Deal handled it all—writing, directing, choreography—and with Al Evans (who provided Music Supervision), composed and arranged some new songs mixed in with standards to create a musical with the flavor of a revue. Deal was most pleased when New York reviewers commented that “one could not discern where the original music began and the extant music left off.”¹⁶ Fay DeWitt, a well-known star of stage and screen and veteran of the nightclub circuit, was welcomed back to New York City, originating the role of Kay Goodman.



In 1988, DeWitt guest-starred on Eisenhower & Lutz as a boozy broad captivated by Bud’s lounge-lizard act.

Tom Spiroff, having had a long association with Deal, started out playing bongos in an early tryout, but quickly moved into the role of Sal, making his New York debut as one of the High Hopes. Stephen Berger played Buck Holden, Denise Nolan was the young protégé, Dorothy, and Steve Gideon, as Mitch, rounded out the cast. The show consistently pulled in crowds and was deemed a hit. An original cast recording was produced, by (you may have guessed) Dennis Deal. The show at the Ballroom closed in September 1984, but other theaters

around the country quickly snapped up the rights to produce the show.

After a hit run in Florida the following summer, producer T. Harding Jones and Dennis Deal sought a west coast debut and reassembled some of the original cast, with Fay DeWitt, Tom Spiroff and Steve Gideon reprising their roles. Recently Deal explained how Scott came by the role of Buck. “There were no auditions. Scott was referred to us (T. Harding Jones, producer, and myself). Then Scott recommended Krista to us. Not pushy. But he didn’t need to be. We really liked her, and once the show was up and in full swing, absolutely loved her.” Deal staged and directed the production, and Corey Allen served as musical director. Allen also played piano for the three-piece band that included drums and a bass.



Photo courtesy of Jay Schwartz

*Even down to the guys’ white buck shoes,
these five radiate ‘50s verve
(l-r) Tom Spiroff, Krista Neumann, Fay DeWitt,
Scott Bakula, and Steve Gideon*

Nite Club Confidential opened at the 99-seat Tiffany Theater on January 31, 1986 after one week of previews, and was an instant smash hit. Slated to end on March 16, overwhelming demand kept the show running until the following January. Although there was talk of finding a larger venue, nothing came of it. Most of the larger spaces lacked the intimacy of the Tiffany, and certainly the move would have caused production costs to soar. Theaters with under 100 seats fall into the Equity-waiver category. In Los Angeles this often means that actors work for no pay, perhaps compensated with free tickets, so that they can showcase their talent and snag a lucrative screen role. However, with an initial budget of \$100,000, producers Jones and Deal were able to offer DeWitt a star’s salary of \$325 a week, and the remaining four cast members the standard weekly Equity scale of \$233. Nevertheless the insurance and pension payments on the actors’ behalf would have been waived in the smaller house. Doing theater, especially in Los Angeles,

is hardly a living. Actors might only be able to appear in such roles for a short time, so that they can earn insurance credits through Screen Actors Guild or other full-Equity productions.

Not anticipating a long holdover, Scott had made other commitments: ABC had picked up *Gung Ho* for a late fall debut, plus an offer for a supporting role in *The Last Fling* and a guest shot on *My Sister Sam* materialized. So Scott left the role at the end of May or beginning of June (replaced by Steven Forbes Hall), and returned for two weeks in August. (It is unclear exactly when Krista left the production.)

A song lyric expresses the concept rather succinctly: “Three-way love is a one-way ticket to a dead-end street.” The atmosphere is steeped in “lounges, lies and lust.” Arrangements by Deal and Evans are reminiscent of all the period’s stylings—crooning, scat, be-bop, and tight four-part harmonies. Throughout the show Buck has plenty of stage time and sings several songs as part of the High Hopes trio; there was also an early duet (“Love Isn’t Born, It’s Made”) with Kay and later a reprise with Dorothy; and a solo, Mercer’s “I Thought About You.”



Screen capture by Helene Kaplan

It’s easy to see why Fay and Dorothy swooned over Buck

In the libretto, Buck Holden is described as “A good-looking nightclub singer/hustler type in his early thirties. His minimal talents are overshadowed by his personal magnetism and sex appeal. He is clever, but not intellectual; good-natured, but not kind. Throughout the show his opportunistic tendencies come to the fore, and his broad shoulders develop a chip.”¹⁷

All of these characteristics are aptly expressed in a duet about Buck (“All Man,” a Deal/Evans number) sung by Kay and Dorothy:

I didn’t get me a ‘man about town’/
And I didn’t get me a cum laude; Brown/
We’re just two little girls to whom heaven sent/
A fella who backs up what Darwin meant!

For more photos and a synopsis of the story, we refer our readers to Helene Kaplan’s article in Observer #24.

Not only did the production please the crowds, but it wowed the critics as well. “Deal moves this two-act musical along like a breeze and keeps it as fresh as a brisk spring day...Bakula is a new find destined for stardom. With the odd good looks of a DeNiro and a mellow crooning voice, he is bound to make the *Pal Joey* kind of anti-hero popular again.”¹⁸ “Bakula’s Buck is, if the original cast album is any indication, even better than his New York counterpart—cockier, greedier and funnier in emulating ‘50s cool.”¹⁹

At Thanksgiving Edie Adams replaced Fay DeWitt (who took a medical leave), and Adams was in turn replaced by renowned female impersonator Jim Bailey. Bailey continued in the role at the Tiffany until *Nite Club Confidential* closed in mid-January 1987, when the show hauled up stakes and moved to Boston.

Since filming was complete for the initial nine-episode order of *Gung Ho*, Scott and Krista were free to follow *Nite Club Confidential* to Boston’s Next Move Theatre, recreating their roles as Buck and Dorothy, once again under Deal’s direction. Here Laura Kenyon starred as Kay Goodman and Steve Gideon continued his role as Mitch. Previews began on February 3, with a limited 4-week engagement ending on March 7, 1987.

In the years following *Quantum Leap*, Bakula and Spiroff teamed up again, establishing Bakula Productions, Inc. and acquiring the rights to make a *Nite Club Confidential* movie. For whatever reason, it never came about, and after several years they allowed the rights to expire. Although the show has cropped up consistently over the last few years, maybe Deal was right all along. “Nostalgia travels in 30-year patterns,”⁷ and the 30-year cycle had temporarily passed. A spoof of the ‘50s—wonderful and profitable in the ‘80s—could be ripe for revival a couple of years from now.



You can almost hear the “doo-wah”

CATCHING UP WITH TOM SPIROFF

By e-mail June 2007

The last time we interviewed Tom was for our July 2000 issue, just as pre-production was gearing up on BPI's *Papa's Angel's*.

Sharon: It is hard to believe that it has been seven years since we last got in touch. First, let me say that I realize that *Nite Club Confidential* was more than 20 years ago, but I'm hoping you still have some recollections about the show.

Tom: It was a great experience and introduction to Los Angeles. We were only skedded to run 6 weeks, but the show was a smash and ran for one year. All positive memories.

Sharon: You must have enjoyed the role of Sal.

Tom: Oh yea! I love creating the role and doing the show for as many performances as I did. I actually started out in the original production (at Van Burens/NYC) playing the bongos in the orchestra! I opened the show with a "Rod Sterling-like" monologue.



Spiroff in 1984 as Sal performing "Black Slacks" in the off-Broadway production of Nite Club Confidential

In LA, I had many positive run-ins with stars from Bruce Willis to Kirk Douglas. Mr. Douglas actually came up to my dressing room after a show and shook my hand! Two weeks later at Spagos restaurant, I was at a table eating, Mr. Douglas came in, noticed me, and extended his hand. I stood up to shake it, and he said (real loud!), "Hey Sal! Good to see you!! You were just great in that show. Just great!"

Sharon: I also noticed that you understudied for Buck. Did you have any chance to go on in that role?

Tom: Yes. I did go on for awhile and it was great!!

Sharon: I find it interesting that after DeWitt left the show on a medical leave, Edie Adams briefly took on the role of Kay Goodman, only to be replaced by Jim Bailey. How did that go?

Tom: That was really fun. I was playing Buck at the time. Interesting and fun, and we had great audience responses to Jim.

Sharon: NCC, with Steve Gideon and the same production staff, then moved directly to Boston's Next Move Theater, in February 1987—again bringing Scott and Krista on board—but you didn't go along.

Tom: I went on to focus on my new life and career in Los Angeles. After Boston, the show has been many places (Dennis Deal would know)...

Sharon: Your new production company, Macedon Media, seems as if it is doing quite well. What sorts of projects would you like to tell us about?

Tom: I've recently produced and directed two film shorts, and a reality show pilot. One of the shorts is called *Chicken Man*, which is being developed as a one-hour tv series to be called *Echo Park*. The *Reality Check* pilot [a spoof of reality shows] is still being developed for TVGuide.com

I also consult for producers and new production companies in the areas of film finance, development, and production.

Sharon: I see that your website lists Scott as one of the producers for *Copperhead*. Is his involvement strictly financial, or will it be somewhat hands on?

Tom: *Copperhead* is on hold. Not active. Scott was to star.

Sharon: What have been the highlights of your career so far?

Tom: *Nite Club Confidential*/working with Dennis Deal; *What Girls Learn & Papa's Angels*/working with Scott; *Escanaba in da Moonlight & Super Sucker*/working with Jeff Daniels.

Sharon: People are always asking, what are the chances *Papa's Angels* will come out on DVD? I believe Ray Bunch's unreleased CD would make a nice accompaniment to the DVD, and the package would certainly make a nice holiday gift for the fans.

Tom: Scott and/or I don't own it. Paramount and CBS do. We have no control over any type of release.

Best regards, Tom Spiroff



Romance Romance

No doubt even a novice Scott-fan is aware of Bakula's performance in *Romance, Romance*. After all, he garnered a Tony nomination for this dual-character role in a Broadway hit, and this accolade is frequently cited in published articles and bios. For anyone interested in getting acquainted with Bakula's theater work, it's an excellent place to start.

The original cast recording is readily available (Amazon.com), and is so well-crafted that it vividly tells the two uncomplicated stories. Plus, with only two—or at most four—voices to follow, there is little need for additional dialog or libretto at hand. The music by Keith Herrmann offers beguiling tunes in a wide variety of styles, and the lyrics by Barry Harman are particularly clever and relatable. And unlike the cast recording of *3 Guys*, you can play this one in your car stereo with the volume up and the windows open. Rather than supplying a synopsis, I will leave it to our readers to (re)discover for themselves the particulars of characters, plot and score.



Scott and Alison Fraser share a kiss as Alfred and Josefina in Act I of *Romance, Romance*

Photo by Martha Swope

Act I, "The Little Comedy," is set in turn-of-the-twentieth-century upper-class Austria and presented as a light operetta "featuring romantic waltzes, a skipping polka, and some lovely ballads."²⁰ The premise is based upon an 1890's short story by Arthur Schnitzler (*Die Kleine Komödie*). Although Act II is based upon an 1899 French play ("Le Pain de Ménage") by Jules Renard, it became the perfect vehicle for an idea about contemporary leisure-life among the Yuppies in the Hamptons, which Harman and Herrmann had tried to use in a musical several years before. Placing Act II, "Summer Share," firmly in the present, and flavoring it with pop-rock tunes emphasizes the contrast. Yet, the two acts deliver a similar theme. "*Romance, Romance* looks at the facades of love, honesty in relationships and the difficulties of commitment."²¹ One song, "It's Not Too Late," appears in both acts and reveals that even a century cannot change the fundamentals of love. Harman elaborates: "both [acts] show how people try to sustain romantic illusions by being creative with their fantasies."²²

Surely in the spring of 1988, the stars must have aligned to favor such a unique set of circumstances that culminated in Scott's longest-running role on stage, a bona fide Broadway

hit. *Romance, Romance* had to leap numerous hurdles just to make it past the off-off-Broadway tryout in the fall of 1987. And the idea that Scott, living in Los Angeles and starring in an up-for-renewal television series (*Eisenhower & Lutz*), might do a stage production in New York surely seemed unlikely.

Barry Harman, who wrote the book and lyrics and directed the show, and Keith Herrmann, who wrote the music and scored the vocal and dance arrangements, were both from the east coast, but they only teamed up after Harman came back after a dozen years in Los Angeles. While out in L.A., Harman met Harve Brosten; they had been fellow-writers on *All in the Family*. (Both won Emmys in 1978.) It was Brosten, along with Jay S. Bulmash who first produced the tryout of Harman and Herrmann's show at the 99-seat Actor's Outlet Theatre in the Chelsea district of Manhattan. This first version of *Romance, Romance* starred Alison Fraser (in the dual role Josefina/Monica) and Dennis Parlato (as Alfred/Sam, the part that would later go to Scott). Supporting roles went to Deborah Graham (as She/Barb) and Robert Hoshour (as He/Lenny). The show opened October 30, 1987 after 19 previews, and ran for 37 performances and except for a few new songs, was nearly identical to the follow-up production. [In the Broadway version, the jazz-infused, manic "Now" was substituted for "If It Happens," and a recording of "Romance, Romance" by Nell Carter was heard during intermission. The latter song appears as a finale on the cast recording (sung by cast members, not Carter), but was never performed as part of the show *per se*.]

At that time small theaters in New York (99 seats or less) could produce shows rather cheaply under Equity's "mini-contract," where actors might work in exchange for their expenses for a limited number of performances, with the hope of being seen by agents and producers. In addition, those involved in the production would have the promise of moving with the show, should a transfer uptown ensue. Had it not been for Parlato's decision to take a supporting role in the Broadway opening of *Chess*, a six-million dollar production fresh from London with the backing of the Shubert Organization, he might have accompanied his three castmates, and not left Harman and Herrmann searching for a new male lead.

Expenses for the tryout came to \$112,000; but ten times that amount would be required if they wanted to bring even a small show such as this to a larger house, or possibly to Broadway where extravaganzas in the \$5M to \$10M range were vying for customers. Financial backing needed to be found. Fortunately at Brosten and Bulmash's invitation and on the advice of Nell Carter, producer Dasha Epstein (with 15 years experience and a number of Broadway hits) attended one of those early performances and fell in love. "This is my romantic notion:" Epstein said, "That you don't have to have a big, big name or the hype of a show from London or a fifteen-million-dollar advance for a show to

work.”²³ Originally she had secured an April 5 opening in the 800-seat John Golden Theatre with the backing of the Shubert Organization. But partly because the organization was occupied with *Chess*, and partly because Epstein favored the 499-seat Helen Hayes (the smallest of the Broadway houses), they pulled their support.

This left Epstein, Brosten and Bulmash even more determined to bring the production to Broadway for under \$1M. In addition to finding more backers, they had to do some creative financing. First the three agreed to forego their producer salaries until the show took off. Epstein then asked unions to make concessions (all but the musicians’ union agreed), and she pulled in promotion from Elizabeth Arden (who offered window space for posters and costume renderings for two weeks during previews) and costumes from Perry Ellis for Act II. She even garnered some airplay on the NYU radio station. With all of the penny-pinching, they managed to raise the \$702,000 capital needed for the cost of the move and the escrow for a two-week run. (Equity and theater unions dictate that cast members, musicians and theater staff be assured at least two weeks pay, even if the show closes sooner.)

“The Broadway move was a business decision—and a matter of timing,”²⁴ Epstein said. The vital element was the Helen Hayes Theater, which not only had the intimacy needed for the small cast and the two minimal, functional sets, but was also located across from *Phantom of the Opera*—a sell-out, which would draw crowds to the area and perhaps provide some drop-in business. A May 1 opening also meant that the production would be just under the wire for consideration for the season’s Tony awards, and nominations would provide a boost if the show was going to last through the tourist season. Then, just as everything seemed to be falling into place, a minor scare as the theater itself went on the auction block. Fortunately “a suitable bid did not materialize, the theater wasn’t sold and the show could go on.”²³

While producers were scuttling about town for money, Harman and Herrmann still needed a leading man. Back in July of 1987, Bakula had been cast to star as Bud Lutz, Jr. in *Eisenhower & Lutz*, a half-hour sitcom ordered by CBS as a 13-week mid-season replacement. The Mary Tyler Moore Production, created and produced by Allan Burns, had been filming before a live audience from October to mid-February in Los Angeles, where Bakula and his family had been living for two years. The show was scheduled to debut on March 14 (on either side of the popular *Newhart* series) and looked very promising. While in New York City for promotional purposes, Scott met with Harman and Herrmann and finalized the deal. By March 17 Scott was back in New York to begin rehearsals. Krista and four-year-old Chelsy followed two weeks later, planning to spend the spring living in the city. Scott quipped, “We even found an apartment, which is almost as hard as finding a job on Broadway.”²⁵

“Scott was our original choice,” Harman said, “because we knew he could do both acts, sing legit in the first and rock out in the second, but we couldn’t get him.” Herrmann agrees; he had worked with Scott on an industrial for Waldenbooks years before, and then in 1985 when he was conducting *Cats* on Broadway and Scott was doing *3 Guys*, both played softball in the Broadway League. “I’d meet him at third base as he was running home and yell, ‘Scott, ya wanna do a show next year?’”²³

“When the producers sent me a copy of the script I immediately became interested,” Bakula said. “Here’s a show that requires a guy to play two entirely different styles...Both plays have wonderful scenes and melodically, both shows are terrific. It’s a chance for me to be on the stage all the time, and that’s the kind of challenge I like.”²⁵ “I liked it because it’s small and very theatrical. And intimate.”²⁶

Nevertheless Bakula had a bit of nervous trepidation about returning to Broadway. “I was scared to death just thinking about it in California....I’ve been doing this kind of down and out, lush lawyer-type of character for seven months now. It’s a shock....I don’t feel like I’m the star of some big series coming back and taking a role...I mean, I wasn’t hired to sell tickets.”²³ Furthermore, the timing was critical. “I came into it saying, ‘I’ve got a TV series and may have to go back in mid-June, and the producers said, ‘OK.’”²⁷

Something besides the role’s versatility was drawing Scott back. At the time, Scott remarked that being in front of a camera can be “confining,” requiring an actor to hit his mark and be still. Whereas *Romance, Romance* gave him a chance “to be physical on stage—to move and to do things”²⁷ once again.

Events over the next several weeks probably seemed chaotic. After a month of rehearsals, April 20 marked the start of two weeks of previews, and the show opened on Sunday, May 1. Nearly a full-page article on the front of the *New York Times* Theater section that morning, accompanied by a Hirschfeld drawing, secured the little show a solid spot in the limelight. The next evening, Outer Critics Circle Award winners for off-Broadway productions were announced; *Romance, Romance* had tied (with *Oil City Symphony*) for Best Musical, and won for Best Book, Music and Lyrics from a Musical. Next Barry Harman received a Drama Desk nomination for Outstanding Lyrics. Then as Scott put it, “the following Sunday the Tony nominations came out, a week later we were in the recording studio doing the album and two weeks later we were performing live on the Tony Awards.”²⁸

In all, *Romance, Romance* received five Tony nominations. Best Musical (in which the award would go to the producers); Barry Harman for Best Book; Harman and Herrmann for Best Original Score; Alison Fraser for Best Actress in a Musical; and Scott for Best Actor in a Musical.

Getting the Best Musical nod meant that the show would widen its exposure; traditionally each nominated musical presents a brief medley during the live, primetime CBS network broadcast. Probably realizing the importance this could mean for the show's success, Scott said "he was 'a wreck' before his award-show performance"²⁹



The Tony Awards broadcast was on June 5, 1988

But Harman was more realistic. "We knew we would never win, but it really was a tremendous thrill to be nominated. To be up against the two biggest songwriters of our generation was just terrific."³⁰ He was speaking of course of Andrew Lloyd Webber (*Phantom of the Opera*) and Stephen Sondheim (*Into the Woods*)—the big contenders (and winners) that season. Scott reaffirmed how happy they were to be included in such a prestigious group. "There were lots of great musicals, and they were all by well-known, top people. We were a tiny musical, tucked away, and yet we got five nominations and a lot of attention. It was a lovely moment."³¹

Alison Fraser, Scott's co-star, deserved all of the accolades that came her way, displaying a stage presence and strong voice that reminded critics of a young Angela Lansbury or Bernadette Peters. Harman recalls, "The first time Alison walked in the door to audition for that first off-off-Broadway version, we knew she was it. Of course, she has an incredible voice, but the most important thing for this script is that Alison is aggressive, but vulnerable at the same time."³²

Fraser admitted she was "scared to death" when Scott became Parlato's replacement. "'The audience has to feel the attraction between these two,' she points out, 'and luckily Scott and I clicked very well together. We have the same sort of conversational singing voice, and he makes me laugh.'

In response, Bakula says, 'I've replaced people a couple of times, and I knew I didn't want to be plugged into a show,' ...Alison threw out everything she had done before and said, 'Let's start new.' That made the big difference."³⁰

Notices for the show were mixed. While most preferred Act I, others felt Act II was better. But even when critics were not bowled over by the material, reviews were favorable to its stars. "Scott Bakula and Alison Fraser both have considerable stage presence and good musical comedy voices."³³ "The surprises are Bakula, and Fraser, who tosses off operetta and pop like a pro."³⁴ "Its stars...are definite Tony contenders. Bakula has the leading-man qualities of Cary Grant or Gregory Peck (whom he much resembles,...): egregious good looks, a body that can semaphore meaning without seeming to strike poses and an ingratiating smile."³⁵

But Scott's contract was supposedly up in mid-June. What made him stay in this winning little show? There were a couple of factors actually. Normally television productions for the fall season would be starting in July, but in the case of *E&L*, which showed only modest ratings, CBS decided not to renew the series. And with the impending writers' strike on the horizon (with no settlement in sight), there might not be many new scripts or guest star roles available in Hollywood until production on regular series would begin again. (The strike eventually lasted five months and

set back the television season appreciably).

So Scott remained with the show as Alfred/Sam until September 28. Press coverage for the show continued through the summer, not only with feature articles in *TheaterWeek*, but also a full-page color photo of Scott, decked out in Armani, in *GQ*'s September 1988 issue.



Frans van der Heyden for *GQ*

Sal Viviano, the standby for Alfred/Sam during its run, took over for a week until officially replaced by Barry Williams on October 4. Williams, Fraser, Graham and Hoshour all remained with the production until it closed (after 297 performances) on January 15, 1989.

In the summer of 1992, the Cherry County Playhouse in Michigan mounted a very similar production of *Romance, Romance*. Of the original Broadway cast members, only Deborah Graham returned, recreating her role as She/Barb. Produced with funding from the A&E television network, the production was filmed and broadcast later that year on the cable channel.

Then just this spring (in what could have been its final season ever), the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, New Jersey presented a revival delightfully reminiscent of the original production. The musical starred Matt Bogart and Jessica Boevers. A short video clip is currently available at papermill.org <<http://papermill.org/stage/shows.php?ID=56>>

The last refrain of the show reminds us: “Cherish your romantic notions.” Mine is that Scott will never grow tired of performing romantic roles in musicals.

The Quantum Leap Years (1989-May 1993)

Returning to Los Angeles in October 1988, Scott auditioned and was immediately offered the role of Sam Beckett. Filming for *Quantum Leap* began later that month, and NBC premiered the series on Easter Sunday, March 26, 1989. Although Scott never found time for stage work during the five seasons of *Quantum Leap*'s production, the series afforded innumerable opportunities for Scott to perform—singing, dancing, playing piano and guitar—and make full use of his athletic abilities. Promotional guest spots, including two Macy's Thanksgiving Parades, presented more occasions for singing and dancing. The great advantage to being on screen is that inevitably more people can enjoy and become familiar with Scott's wide range of talents and can revisit his work through television reruns and DVD releases.

Recently *Entertainment Weekly* named *Quantum Leap* one of the 25 best sci-fi series/films from the past 25 years. It cited one of the fans' favorite episodes—“Catch a Falling Star”—as the “Best Bit,” which “let Bakula flaunt his Broadway background, as Sam leaped into an actor playing Don Quixote in ‘Man of La Mancha.’”³⁶



Without a doubt Sam Beckett was one of the most multi-faceted characters ever written for television and Scott has always remarked how grateful he has been for the role.

And Beyond

On Tuesday afternoon, September 21, 1993, a launch party for the *Quantum Leap* home videos and the *Quantum Leap* CD was held at Wizardz Nightclub in Universal Studios' Citywalk complex. Accompanying himself on guitar, Scott sang several songs from the new CD for a roomful of fans, television reporters and the press. The following evening, *Entertainment Tonight* featured footage of the event.



Both Scott and Dean were on hand at Wizardz to promote the Quantum Leap CD and home video releases

Around the same time, Scott also did a studio recording of “It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas,” sweetly sung with a simple piano accompaniment. The song was released later that year on a double CD call “Caberet Noël: A Broadway Cares Christmas,” a compilation of holiday tunes by some of Broadway's best known performers. At the time of this writing, the *QL*-CD, Scott's CD-single of “Somewhere in the Night,” and a few copies of the holiday CD are still available at Amazon.com.

Leaving *QL* behind hardly meant that Scott lacked work. After *QL* was cancelled, he was immediately snapped up by the CBS half-hour sitcom *Murphy Brown* (starring Candice Bergen) to portray Peter Hunt, a hot-shot “scud-stud” reporter hired to liven up the anchor desk at FYI, the fictional news show of the series. In what seemed to be a very apropos remark, Corky Sherwood (Faith Ford) claimed, “our ratings went up five points every time Peter appeared.”³⁷ His recurring character also livened up single-mom Murphy's love life. The other members of the team were not so enamored; anxiety over their own jobs generated a comical tension that furthered the storylines.



Murphy Brown interviewing Peter Hunt about his plans for the future

Those feelings were strictly for the camera, however. Scott said, "It's not easy to fit a new character into a show that's been on for five years, but they've all gone out of their way to make me feel at home."³⁸

Filmed before a live audience on Friday evenings after a week of rehearsals, episodes might almost be considered mini-stage productions, and as mentioned earlier (p.12), the writers even gave Scott an opportunity to sing.

During three seasons of *Murphy Brown* Scott appeared in a total of thirteen episodes, starred in four films (*Mercy Mission*, *Nowhere to Hide*, *Lord of Illusions*, *Cats Don't Dance*), appeared in two others (*Color of Night*, *Mi Familia*), was executive producer and star of a tv pilot (*Prowler*), taped a two-episode guest shot on Brian Benben's HBO series, *Dream On*, and made countless promotional and charitable appearances. Almost incredibly he managed to find time to appear back onstage, not just once, but three times.

16th Annual Kennedy Center Honors

On December 5, 1993, Scott participated in a tribute to Stephen Sondheim at the 16th Annual Kennedy Center Honors held at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. Each year five accomplished artists from a variety of disciplines are acknowledged at a formal dinner and in a staged presentation featuring a video biography and performances by their colleagues. The other honorees that evening were comedian Johnny Carson; former Chicago Symphony Orchestra conductor Sir Georg Solti; dancer-choreographer Arthur Mitchell; and gospel singer Marion Williams. As a post-holiday treat for the nation, the production was broadcast during primetime on CBS on December 29, 1993.

Sondheim's tribute begins with Angela Lansbury narrating the video-biography of his life and career. The musical selections commence with a large chorus congregating onstage singing "In comes company..." (*Company*). Featured performers are introduced alphabetically—Jason Alexander, Scott, and Bernadette Peters—and the three segue into a stanza from "Old Friends" from *Merrily We Roll Along*. Solos follow, first with Scott singing "Not While I'm Around," a tender ballad from one of Bakula's oft-mentioned favorite musicals, *Sweeney Todd*.

Next Peters sings "Not a Day Goes By" also from *Merrily*; then Alexander (with a bit of staged encouragement from Scott) sings "I'm Calm" from *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. A brief pas de deux from *A Little Night Music* precedes Lansbury's moving solo, "Send in the Clowns," from the same show. As a finale, all performers reemerge onstage for a rousing chorus of "Side by Side by Side" (from *Company*).



Scott singing "Not While I'm Around"
from *Sweeney Todd*

At the conclusion of the ceremony, host Walter Cronkite reflects on Leonard Bernstein, one of Kennedy Center's first honorees, who collaborated with then-novice Sondheim on *West Side Story*. As a tribute to both of them, acclaimed opera soprano Kathleen Battle sings "Somewhere," with Elliot Lawrence conducting the Kennedy Center Honors Orchestra.

In a recent interview, Scott called these brief tributes and benefit appearances as "beautiful little perks. They were always fast and furious and never relaxed."³⁹

Men, Movies & Carol

By this time in Scott's career there was a large contingent of fans tracking and attending his public appearances. Largely due to the vigilance and expertise of Leapers who had organized the fan-run *QL* convention in February 1994, information was readily circulated via the Internet. So it comes as no surprise that on June 24, 1994 many of Scott's fans had gotten tickets and were in the audience for one or both performances of *Men, Movies & Carol*, a one-hour variety special being filmed at CBS TV City's Studio 46, to be broadcast the following fall. Then as now, these sorts of events serve as impromptu get-togethers, giving e-mail friends from all over the world the opportunity to reconnect with one another.

The "Men" in this case were Barry Bostwick, Michael Jeter, Scott, and last (but quite absent on June 24) Tony Bennett. Bennett's segment was scheduled to be done July



photo by Monty Brinton, CBS

14, and the footage edited to make it seem as if he were part of the group. The show begins with introductions, as each of the men dressed in tuxes makes an entrance, dancing and singing "Steppin' out with My Baby," (from *Easter Parade*) and easing past Carol.

The “Movies” are spoofs of famous films. As Carol introduces the show, she says, “Since tonight’s show is about movies, we chose the subject that brings more people to the box office than any other – sex!” Indeed.

And “Carol,” of course, is Carol Burnett, Golden Globe-, Emmy- and Tony Award-winning singer/comedienne, with a long history of popular sketch comedy series and variety shows.

The first movie-scene parody is called “Double Insanity,” a B&W film noir skit with Carol and Scott, which harkens back to “Double Indemnity.” Then Barry has a chance to solo with Carol, in “Remainders of the Day,” as a very uptight British butler and maid vicariously enjoying a discussion of the cleaning chores. “Fidangamento Siciliano” follows with Michael as Carol’s suitor; his ministrations, spoken in Italian, are translated by Scott. (Perhaps this lampoon is an homage to Anna Magnani films.) The fourth skit, called “White Tie and Tails,” is a Ginger Rogers/Fred Astaire knock-off, with Barry dancing all over the room—literally. (I might mention that this was the order in which the skits were broadcast on television, not the order in which they were presented to the audiences in the studio.) “College Graduate” follows with Carol as the seductive older woman and Scott acting nervous and inexperienced as they recreate the famous Mrs. Robinson scene in “The Graduate.”



Recreating the famous scene from The Graduate

“Tony’s Spot” follows, first with Bennett singing “By Myself” nearly acapella, then joined by Carol for a string of Astaire songs. Next, the pièce de résistance of the hour finally arrives: “Tillie’s Truck Stop,” where Scott, Barry, Michael and Carol (all accomplished Broadway-musical vets) present a 12½-minute medley of old MGM movie tunes to a group of truckers, who chose the show over the soup. Choreography by Don Crichton makes clever use of the countertop and diner equipment, and each of the four gets his share of solos and spotlights. Some of Scott’s most

memorable bits include, “We’re a Couple of Swells,”



“Singin’ in the Rain,” and “Jailhouse Rock.”

In the end, “Tillie” closes up shop for the night, and leaves with Tony.

Fans actually had the opportunity to attend three “performances” on June 24, if they managed to get tickets early enough. At 2:30 in the afternoon, there was a “Pre-tape and Run-thru.” The first skit taped was technically the most difficult. Called “Dancin’ on the Wall,” it was the “White Tie and Tails” skit seen in the broadcast. It took an hour-and-a-half to get the details exactly right, because it had to be done in one take; the tape of the skit would be shown on the monitors at the two evening performances. During the lulls Carol would talk with the audience and sign autographs. The second skit was the Italian dinner with Carol and Michael.

Last, the opening number with all the guys in tuxes was rehearsed. The sound level wasn’t quite right because the applause was louder than the music. They had to run through the opening again. By one fan’s account, “They made Scott go back up on the platform and were discussing the problem when Carol said, ‘Well, just have them not applaud when Scott comes out.’ And he said, ‘If they don’t applaud, I won’t come out.’ Everyone laughed. They told him to go back and come out again. Then he replied, ‘I have to change because they’ve already seen this outfit.’ As he was walking down the back of the platform, Carol yelled, ‘You stay out of my wardrobe.’ This of course got a big reaction from us. Scott looked very sheepish and sunk down out of sight. She continued, ‘Unless I’m in it!’” By the sound of it, the rehearsal was just as entertaining as the performances later that evening.

Dressy attire was required for each of the two evening performances, although the camera would only show the audience in deep shadows. The first was at 5:30pm, called “Tape Dress,” with the other at 8:30pm, called “Tape Air.” Except for the pre-taped sketch with Barry mentioned above, the opening number, the skits and the finale were presented live to both audiences.

In a later interview Burnett remarked that having rehearsed the show as a play, the tapings before the audiences went

smoothly with no “more than seven minutes between any of the sketches,” and each scene ended “with impromptu bows from the laughing stars.” Originally they hadn’t planned on using the bows, but the camera was running and it looked so natural, it was kept in the final edit.⁴⁰



“The MGM Tribute” medley for the finale was created by Ken Welch and Mitzie Welch, and arranged and orchestrated by Peter Matz. All three have had a very long association with Burnett, going back at least as far as her Emmy-nominated special with Julie Andrews, *Julie and Carol at Lincoln Center* in 1971. Bob Mackie, another longtime associate of Burnett’s, designed all the costumes for the show. Not only is the clothing spot-on for the sketches but the performers look graceful and comfortable throughout their marvelously zany routines. Paul Miller, veteran at directing live telecasts, staged the special.

Plenty of press attention was paid to the Monday, October 24 broadcast. There was coverage in newspapers, *TV Guide*, and cover stories or feature articles in just about every local television listing, all heralding the return of Carol Burnett and her variety show format, even if it was for only one night.

Although the special was panned by *Variety*, *TV Guide* highlighted the show in several places in the issue and rated the show a 7 (out of 10).⁴¹ *New York* magazine called it “retrograde, but a lot (of) fun...The surprise is Scott Bakula, just as deft impersonating Dustin Hoffman or Gene Kelly as he is doing Elvis and Bruce Springsteen.”⁴²



Considering all the hype, ratings were less than stellar. With a start time of 10pm, the show had a difficult timeslot

against two 9pm blockbusters: Monday Night Football (with 22.8M viewers, ranking #7 for the week) and the conclusion of the four-hour miniseries Danielle Steel’s *Family Album* (with 20.2M, ranking #9). Although the 9pm *Murphy Brown* episode garnered a very respectable 20.4M viewers and ranked #12, CBS lost viewers with the sitcom *Love and War* that followed (dropping to 16.7M) and by 10pm the number of CBS viewers had declined to 14.4M, leaving *Men, Movies & Carol* at #49 for the week. All of which was probably enough to reinforce the network’s opinion that variety shows, even those of Burnett’s caliber, were dead.

Regardless of the reviews and ratings, the real accolades for performers come from their peers. The following summer, Carol Burnett was nominated for an Emmy (Outstanding Individual Performer in a Variety or Musical Show) and Bob Mackie won an Emmy for his Costume Designs.

Immediately after the broadcast, *Men, Movies & Carol* (in VHS format only) was made available by telephone and mail order, and it is still in limited supply at Amazon.com. With a runtime of 47 minutes, it demonstrates the amount of commercial time that has crept into primetime broadcasts during the last decade. Currently one-hour television shows contain only 41 to 42 minutes of material, and like the rising price of gasoline, this trend isn’t likely to change.

Anyone Can Whistle

Sondheim. To musical theater buffs, no other appellation is needed. Now at 77 years old, Stephen Sondheim is one of the foremost lyricist/composers of contemporary musical theater. How can one man—with so few long-running “hits”—be regarded with such esteem? Maybe it’s because he always dared to try something new. Initial reviews for Sondheim’s musicals have always expressed some puzzlement over the material. Only in retrospect, after audiences become accustomed to the ideas and melodies, do they hunger to revisit his musicals and eagerly await his new works. The 1970 production of *Company* is often cited as the first “concept show” and recognized as a turning point in American theater, but on closer inspection *Anyone Can Whistle*’s arrival in 1964 can be regarded as a foreshadowing of that change and the advent of Sondheim’s unique voice.

Having written the lyrics for the Broadway hits *West Side Story* and *Gypsy*, then following it up with both lyrics and music for *A Funny Thing Happened to Me on the Way to the Forum*, Stephen Sondheim was regarded as a winner. Pairing up once again with Arthur Laurents (*Gypsy*, *Forum*) for the book, Sondheim provided both music and lyrics for *Anyone Can Whistle*, which debuted on Broadway on April 4, 1964. It must have come as quite a shock when the show ran only 9 performances (following 12 previews) and lost every penny of the respected producers’ investment. With an abiding faith in Sondheim’s vision, Columbia Records insisted on a cast recording immediately after closing.

Sondheim was recognized as a runner-up in that year's *Variety* Drama Critics Poll for best composer and lyricist, but the show's only Tony nomination went to Herbert Ross, the choreographer. (*Hello, Dolly!* swept nearly every category.) It was another twelve years, following Sondheim's subsequent successes on Broadway, before a publisher came forward for the libretto, purportedly "from the only extant copy of the original edition."⁴³ With the preservation of the score on the cast recording and Sondheim's renewed popularity, *Anyone Can Whistle* turned into a cult favorite during the '70s. Yet it would be another three decades before another New York production would be attempted.

Many cite the book for *Anyone Can Whistle* to be problematic. A town and its people—and especially Mayoress Cora Hoover Hooper and her retinue—are all presented in sharp-witted satire as cartoon figures, in contrast to Nurse Fay Apple and J. Bowden Hapgood, who express real feelings and emotional growth. With characters that are totally farcical, the idea that an entire town can "buy" a miracle is totally plausible. Yet the aspect of a budding romance seemed to create a bit of confusion among theatergoers.

Also the eclectic nature of the musical numbers offers no constant thread. Presenting every conceivable type of musical style and dance number exaggerates the absurdity of the situation. The musical's opening overture begins with drum rolls that merge into a circus cacophony; Cora's opening number, "Me and My Town," is a Kay-Thompsonesque pastiche, followed by her song "It's a Miracle" with a definite gospel spin. Midway through the show sits a rather unconventional waltz-time ballet, a traditional march, the requisite romantic ballads, and even an aria-like solo. "The complex language and unpredictable, near-operatic melodies [of *Anyone Can Whistle*]...are now considered Sondheimian trademarks,"⁴⁴ but coming during an era of ultra traditional musicals it left audiences perplexed.

But Sondheim never believed in presenting mindless entertainment. "I want a certain mystery for an audience, something that they can sense and even discuss and have to discover for themselves."⁴⁵ Such discovery is even accorded to subsequent directors, allowing them the chance to explore the songs and present them anew, derive new meaning from the story and even offer a differing opinion. While some may consider Sondheim's lyrics to be high-brow, there is no denying that at the heart of each musical, there are at least one or two songs in which the poignant lyrics effectively cut to the quick and resonate long after.

So on Saturday, April 8, 1995, for one night only, exactly thirty-one years after its Broadway debut, a concert version of *Anyone Can Whistle* was presented at Carnegie Hall in NYC, produced as a benefit for Gay Men's Health Crisis. The 2,800 seat concert hall was standing-room-only, filled

with benefactors, colleagues and fans. The event raised over \$650,000, primarily from ticket sales that ranged from \$40 to \$20,000 and donations. Yet, the idea for this star-studded occasion was originally conceived fourteen months earlier (in February 1994) and required unrelenting effort from its producer, Peter Bogyo.

Bogyo's passion for the project stems from a deep respect for Sondheim and a love of the material. While an undergraduate at Yale, Bogyo performed in the world premiere of Sondheim's *The Frogs* ("staged" in the campus swimming pool) and appeared as a 'Cookie' in a college production of *Anyone Can Whistle*. Over the years he corresponded periodically with Sondheim, sharing what he calls "a cordial acquaintanceship."



Photo courtesy of GMHC

(l-r) Walter Bobbie (*Schub*), Scott, Madeline Kahn (*Cora*)
with members of the ensemble
during rehearsal for *Anyone Can Whistle*

Bogyo's first and foremost desire was to utilize as many people as possible from the original production, while getting them to work for free. After speaking with people associated with the original, "I realized that although it had not been a commercial success, everyone involved had been tremendously proud of that show. It hadn't quite worked but that didn't diminish its place in their hearts."⁴⁶ Bogyo first consulted with Sondheim and Arthur Laurents regarding the talent so that they could have some control over the creative elements. Sondheim asked Herbert Ross to direct; he had been the Tony-nominated choreographer for the original. Ross immediately agreed, but did not want to be involved in casting. Naturally Sondheim chose Paul Gemignani, his long-time associate, to be musical director and conductor. With his experience and knowledge of voices, Gemignani would be the one to assist with casting. Laurents even agreed to write a narration that would explain the progression of the story and string the songs together.

Sondheim approached Angela Lansbury, the star of the 1964 production, to serve as the narrator. Since she was working on *Murder, She Wrote* on the west coast, there was only enough time for her to fly in for the weekend, and certainly no time to rehearse or prepare vocally. She agreed immediately, as long as her schedule allowed. Fortunately,

it did. She began her narration with a small inside joke. She introduced the town, saying that she herself had once been "a Mayoreess of such a town—for a very short term."

To ensure the success of the event and get everyone to agree to appear, it would have to be star-studded. For the role of Nurse Fay Apple, Sondheim called Bernadette Peters, who agreed immediately without reservation. Boygo then began pursuing his first choice for each of the other leads (Cora and Hapgood), namely Madeline Kahn and Scott Bakula. Both were interested, but neither wanted to offer their names for ticket sales when they might later have to pull out due to other commitments.

Of the pair, Scott was the more reluctant to pledge his participation. Boygo wanted Scott so badly that they extended his deadline several times, but maintained a list of people already approved, just in case. "Finally, one Friday night I got a call at home, at midnight, from (Bakula's) representative, saying, 'Yes, he'll do it.' That was a day of great rejoicing. We really, really wanted him, and of course he was perfect for the part. He wanted to do it from the beginning but he was too conscientious and ethical [to say yes prematurely]."

"He flew to New York and was there 10am Monday morning of our performance week, completely prepared—he had to arrive completely prepared because we needed those six days to stage it. You see why some people become stars. There are lots of people with talent, but some are professional, conscientious, prepared—they do their homework.

"As part of the producer's duty, even across the country, I arranged for him to have an accompanist if he desired. Some of the numbers are quite complex, especially 'Simple.' That's a very long number, approximately 12 minutes long, with very complex rhythms and a lot of tricky lyrics....It's a truly extraordinary song which integrates movement, music lyrics and dialogue. But he's so self-sufficient and professional....(He never called our pianist; maybe he had his own pianist or maybe he plays, but he clearly did his homework, because he arrived letter-perfect, completely at ease—unbelievably professional. Well, he's started in musicals before on Broadway. He's musical. He's an absolutely charming and wonderful singer."⁴⁶

In addition to Lansbury, Peters, Kahn, and Scott, Boygo assembled a truly stellar cast. Walter Bobbie played Comptroller Schub, Chip Zien played Treasurer Cooley, and Ken Page was Chief Magruder. Cora's attendants—The Boys—included Harvey Evans and Sterling Clark, both of whom were part of the original production in 1964. Harolyn Blackwell (soprano soloist with the Metropolitan Opera), five dancers from the New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre, and 30 Broadway veterans completed the illustrious Ensemble. I have no doubt Scott was already acquainted with many of these talented performers. Aside from having appeared in the Kennedy Center Honors

presentation with Lansbury and Peters, Scott had once before shared a stage with Marin Mazzie (*Hello, I'm Not in Right Now*) and worked with Phillip Hoffman (*Is There Life After High School?*).



Photo by Jack Deutsch for GMHC

(Foreground l-r) Peters & Bakula, Kahn & Bobbie, Ken Page & Chip Zien singing the final refrain of "With So Little to Be Sure Of"

As in any concert version, scenery and props are kept to a minimum and performers stand with their books at microphones. In that regard, this performance was no different. The 23-piece orchestra was placed onstage behind the performers, perhaps to allow for more upfront seating in the orchestra pit area. And yet, with Ross' choreographic background, this was closer to a theatrical production. There was plenty of movement onstage at all times, including dancing and the use of props. And although everyone carried notebooks with the libretto, for that long solo mentioned above, Scott seemed to refer to it only as others were speaking. Later, during his solo, "Everybody Says Don't" and his duet with Peters, "With So Little to Be Sure Of," he put the book down and used both hands to hold the microphone and gesture. (See cover photo.)



Photo by Jack Deutsch for GMHC

"Docteur, docteur, vous êtes charmant" (Bernadette) and Scott generated some real heat together, despite the limits of the concert form."⁴⁷

J. Bowden Hapgood, Scott's character, is a newly-arrived "cookie" (asylum inmate) mistakenly presumed to be a psychiatrist. Scott describes his character as "a very lovable idiot savant." To distinguish himself from all of the other principal players, Scott decided, "if I'd come out with just a tuxedo, I would have looked like everybody else. So I said, 'How about some tennis shoes to make him a little bit quirker?'"³¹ Perhaps he chose to sport a few days growth of beard for the same reason; stubble was (at the time) considered unorthodox and counter-cultural—purportedly the same reasons the other "cookies" needed to be confined.



Photo by Paul Colliton

*Scott and Bernadette backstage
after the performance*

Following Scott's two previous portrayals of psychiatrists (*Color of Night*, *A Passion to Kill*), for me the third time was the charm. Not only a romantic role, but one that allowed him to sing as well! One critic seemed pleased with Scott's portrayal, saying he "made a highly charismatic impression on stage,..(but) tends to adapt the manner of a pop psychology talk-show host with his closely miked soothing tones."⁴⁸ Knowing the subtlety that Scott brings to every role and the not-so-obvious spin (sneakers and stubble) that he chose, it would seem that the critic unwittingly "bought" Scott's performance of a man everyone believes is a doctor.

Originally the musical had been presented in three acts; here the concert version merged the second and third. With one intermission, no need for set changes, and a minimum of dialog between songs, the new version was able to present the entire libretto, plus reinstate two songs—"There Won't Be Trumpets" and "There's Always a Woman"—that had been cut from the Broadway show. There was a recording made at both the afternoon dress rehearsal and in the live performance, and the two versions were compiled into a definitive recording that Columbia (donating their production costs) released on July 18, 1995. With sufficient narration to understand the story, the entire performance is skillfully condensed for the 80-minute CD format. Liner notes with a concise synopsis, numerous color photographs and a full set of lyrics demonstrates part of the reason why the CD received a Grammy nomination as Best Musical Show for 1995.

Presumably with no press passes available, there were few published reviews, and those that did appear came from columnists who were known die-hard Sondheim fans. Ken Mandelbaum praised the entire production. "[T]hanks to strong work from all hands, this 'Whistle' was ultimately another thrilling, not-to-be-missed event." Acknowledging everyone in turn, he said "Bakula made it clear that he could have been Broadway's top musical theater man of the moment had he not gone off to TV stardom; his Hapgood was a marvelous mixture of warmth, intelligence and personal appeal, and his delivery of the numbers, particularly "Everybody Says Don't," left nothing to be desired."⁴⁹

Most reviews came after the release of the recording. *USA Today* gave the recording 3½ out of 4 stars, calling it a winner and "one of the year's best show recordings."⁵⁰ Jameson Baker says Scott's performance "is solid as a rock. Smooth, secure, reliable, relentlessly charming and damn near flawless."⁵¹ Another reviewer said that Bakula "shined in the first act finale as well as the lyrically tricky 'Everybody Says Don't.' However, probably nothing could match the beautifully moving performance by Peters and Bakula of the duet 'With So Little to Be Sure Of.'"⁵²

Just as everyone who performed and worked behind-the-scenes on the production volunteered their time and talent, all of the royalties that would have accrued to the various performers have been designated on GHMC's behalf, making this a truly lasting gift to the organization. This CD too is still available at Amazon.com

Months later Scott would remark, "I would love to do almost any Sondheim show anywhere, anytime. I'm a huge fan of his."⁵³ Scott onstage in another Sondheim musical—I can't wait.



Photo by Donna Aceto

Madeline Kahn, Stephen Sondheim and Bernadette Peters at the Russian Tea Room after the *Anyone Can Whistle* concert

Next installment: Where the road has led since.

As a special treat for our readers, Nancy Cotter's article, "Whistling Up a Concert," is available at our website. It features even more photographs from the *Anyone Can Whistle* concert at Carnegie Hall and details of how the production all came together, despite all the odds.

Permission to reprint photographs, here and at the website, has been generously granted by GMHC. Founded by six gay men in 1981, Gay Men's Health Crisis—GMHC—is a not-for-profit, volunteer-supported and community-based organization committed to national leadership in the fight against AIDS. Through its programs and services, GMHC offers support to thousands of men, women and children every year. More information is available at www.GMHC.org

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