

THE NEW YORK POPS

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ORCHESTRA

Notes on the Program

by Steven Reineke, Music Director

Friday, November 19, 2010, 8:00PM, Carnegie Hall

It is with great pleasure that The New York Pops presents our Carnegie Hall salute to Stephen Sondheim in his 80th birthday year. Undoubtedly the most important living writer of musicals, Sondheim has won eight Tony Awards, an Academy Award, eight Grammy Awards and the Pulitzer Prize.

Stephen Sondheim has been a tremendous influence in my own life. As a composer, I have been a fan of his music since my early teenage years when I was first introduced to his masterpiece, *Sweeney Todd*. Though Sondheim has said he considers it a "dark operetta," I believe *Sweeney Todd* is the greatest American opera since Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. To me, there is not one wrong note or word in the entire score. Everything is exactly in the right place. It is with this respect for Sondheim's music that I have chosen to perform only selections this evening in which he wrote both music and lyrics. We will save for another occasion songs from his landmark collaborations: *West Side Story*, with music by Leonard Bernstein; and *Gypsy*, with music by Jule Styne.

We are delighted to be joined on stage this evening by Kate Baldwin, Alexander Gemignani, Aaron Lazar and Christiane Noll. All four are stellar, veteran performers of Sondheim's music. I am pleased to welcome, as well, the superb chorus Essential Voices USA under the direction of Judith Clurman.

I hope you enjoy tonight's performance of some of Sondheim's best known songs. For any of us creative types, Sondheim has given us a kind of mantra, from the lyric he wrote in "Move On" from *Sunday in the Park with George*:

Anything you do
Let it come from you
Then it will be new
Give us more to see...

Happy Birthday, Stephen, and may you give us more to see (and hear) for years to come!



- Steven Reineke