

San Francisco Playhouse announces updated casting for *Follies*

Book by James Goldman

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Music direction by Dave Dobrusky

Choreography by Nicole Helfer

Legendary musical to make San Francisco professional premiere on June 30th

On stage June 30 – September 10, 2022

Press Opening Wednesday, July 6 at 7:00 P.M.

Note: This production will **not** be available as a video stream.

SAN FRANCISCO (June 24, 2022) — San Francisco Playhouse (Artistic Director **Bill English**; Producing Director **Susi Damilano**) announced updated casting for *Follies* by **James Goldman** and **Stephen Sondheim**. The musical will run on the San Francisco Playhouse Mainstage from June 30 through September 10, 2022. Bill English will direct, with music direction by **Dave Dobrusky** and choreography by **Nicole Helfer**. This marks the first fully staged professional production of *Follies* in San Francisco.

The cast features three-time Helen Hayes Award winner **Natascia Diaz*** in the role of Sally Durant Plummer, alongside local favorites **Samantha Rose Cárdenas*** as Young Sally, **Maureen McVerry*** as Phyllis Rogers Stone, **Danielle Cheiken** as Young Phyllis, **Anthony Rollins-Mullens*** as Buddy Plummer, **Chachi Delgado** as Young Buddy, **Chris Vettel*** as Benjamin Stone, **Cameron La Brie** as Young Benjamin, **Cindy Goldfield*** as Carlotta Champion, **Lucinda Hitchcock Cone*** as Hattie Walker, **Jill Slyter** as Solange LaFitte, **Caroline Louise Altman*** as Stella Deems, **Louis Parnell*** as Dimitri Weismann, **Frederick Winthrop** as Roscoe, **Eiko Yamamoto** as Emily Whitman, **Rene Collins** as Theodore Whitman, and **Emily Corbo, M. Javi Harnly, Anthony Maglio, Catrina Manahan, and Anne Warque** in the ensemble.

Originally slated for the Playhouse's 2019/20 Season and canceled due to Covid-19, the show marks the first fully staged professional production of *Follies* in San Francisco. The musical, which won seven Tony Awards in 1972 and has been heralded by the New York Times as "one of the greatest musicals ever written," closed on Broadway after 522 performances and never went on a national tour.

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"We are thrilled and amazed to be presenting the professional San Francisco premiere of this Sondheim classic," said Bill English, Artistic Director. "More than a dazzling collection of tributes to musical styles from the first half of the 20th century, *Follies* is a meditation on the subject of regret, urging us to either refuse to regret or to make sure we have nothing in life to regret. It is also a profoundly feminist piece, that speaks with even greater power now than it did in 1971. We intend our *Follies* to capitalize on our intimate space to really delve into the characters' dilemmas while at the same time giving space to theatrical wizardry!"

It's 1971, and theatrical impresario Dimitri Weismann is hosting a reunion of former *Follies* performers in his crumbling theatre, about to be demolished to make room for a parking lot. The artists gather for one last time, reminiscing about the past and contemplating their future, before the theater dims its lights for good. Surreal, sophisticated, compelling, heart wrenching and epic in scope, this legendary masterpiece uses the musical theatre as a metaphor for the collapse of American innocence and naiveté.

About the Creators

James Goldman (book) was an American playwright, novelist, and screenwriter, honored with an Academy Award for the screen adaptation of his own play *The Lion in Winter*. He is also the author of the screenplays for *Robin and Marion*, *Nicholas and Alexandra*, and *White Nights*; and the book for Stephen Sondheim's stage musical *Follies*. Mr. Goldman was born in Chicago and was a graduate of the University of Chicago before beginning postgraduate work at Columbia University in music criticism until he was drafted into the army during World War II. In 1961 his whimsical play *They Might Be Giants*, about a man who believes he is Sherlock Holmes and is attended by a psychiatrist named Dr. Watson, was produced by Joan Littlewood in London and 10 years later was turned into a film starring George C. Scott and Joanne Woodward and directed by Anthony Harvey, who also directed the 1968 film version of *A Lion in Winter*. Mr. Goldman's first play on Broadway was a comedy about life in the army, *Blood, Sweat, and Stanley Poole* (1961), written with his brother William Goldman. Other work for the stage includes *A Family Affair*, a collaboration with John Kander, starring Shelley Berman; *Evening Primrose* (1966), his second collaboration with Mr. Sondheim; *Oliver Twist* (1982), *Anna Karenina* (1985), *Anatasia: The Mystery of Anna* (1986), and *Tolstoy* (1996). Mr. Goldman's novels include *The Man from Greek and Roman* (1974), *Myself as Witness* (1980), and *Fulton County* (1989).

Stephen Sondheim (music and lyrics) wrote the music and lyrics for *Saturday Night* (1954), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Anyone Can Whistle* (1964), *Company* (1970), *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *The Frogs* (1974), *Pacific Overtures* (1976), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), *Into the Woods* (1987), *Assassins* (1991), *Passion* (1994) and *Road Show* (2008) as well as lyrics for *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy*

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(1959) and *Do I Hear a Waltz?* (1965) and additional lyrics for *Candide* (1973). Anthologies of his work include *Side by Side by Sondheim* (1976), *Marry Me a Little* (1981), *You're Gonna Love Tomorrow* (1983), *Putting It Together* (1993/99) and *Sondheim on Sondheim* (2010). He composed the scores of the films "Stavisky" (1974) and "Reds" (1981) and songs for "Dick Tracy" (1990) and the television production "Evening Primrose" (1966). His collected lyrics with attendant essays have been published in two volumes: "Finishing the Hat" (2010) and "Look, I Made A Hat" (2011). In 2010 the Broadway theater formerly known as Henry Miller's Theatre was renamed in his honor.

About San Francisco Playhouse

Founded by Bill English and Susi Damilano in 2003, **San Francisco Playhouse** has been described by the New York Times as "a company that stages some of the most consistently high-quality work around" and deemed "ever adventurous" by the Bay Area News Group. Located in the heart of the Union Square Theater District, **San Francisco Playhouse** is the city's premier Off-Broadway company, an intimate alternative to the larger more traditional Union Square theater fare. San Francisco Playhouse provides audiences the opportunity to experience professional theater with top-notch actors and world-class design in a setting where they are close to the action. The company has received multiple awards for overall productions, acting, and design, including the SF Weekly Best Theatre Award and the Bay Guardian's Best Off-Broadway Theatre Award, as well as three consecutive Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for Best Entire Production in the Bay Area (2016-2018). KQED/NPR recently described the company: "San Francisco Playhouse is one of the few theaters in the Bay Area that has a mission that actually shows up on stage. Artistic director Bill English's commitment to empathy as a guiding philosophical and aesthetic force is admirable and by living that mission, fascinating things happen onstage." **San Francisco Playhouse** is committed to providing a creative home and inspiring environment where actors, directors, writers, designers, and theater lovers converge to create and experience dramatic works that celebrate the human spirit.

*Actors appear courtesy of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the U.S.

FOR CALENDAR EDITORS

THE MUSICAL: ***Follies***
Book by **James Goldman**
Music and Lyrics by **Stephen Sondheim**

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THE CAST:

Nataschia Diaz* as Sally Durant Plummer
Samantha Rose Cárdenas* as Young Sally and Ensemble
Maureen McVerry* as of Phyllis Rogers Stone
Danielle Cheiken as Young Phyllis and Young Heidi
Anthony Rollins-Mullens* as Buddy Plummer
Chachi Delgado as Young Buddy
Chris Vettel* as Benjamin Stone
Cameron La Brie as Young Benjamin
Cindy Goldfield* as Carlotta Campion
Lucinda Hitchcock Cone* as Hattie Walker
Jill Slyter as Solange LaFitte
Caroline Louise Altman* as Stella Deems and Heidi Schiller
Louis Parnell* as Dimitri Weismann
Frederick Winthrop as Roscoe
Eiko Yamamoto as Emily Whitman
Rene Collins as Theodore Whitman
Emily Corbo as Ensemble
M. Javi Harnly as Ensemble
Anthony Maglio as Ensemble and Kevin
Catrina Manahan as Ensemble
Anne Warque as Ensemble

WHEN:

In-person performances: June 30 – September 10, 2022
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:00 P.M., Fridays at 8:00 P.M.,
Saturdays at 3:00 and 8:00 P.M., Sundays at 2:00 P.M.

WHERE:

San Francisco Playhouse
450 Post St., San Francisco CA 94102

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TICKETS: **Tickets (\$30 - \$100) are now available.** For tickets or more information, the public may contact the San Francisco Playhouse box office at 415-677-9596, or online at <https://www.sfplayhouse.org/sfph/2021-2022-season/follies/>