

GODSPELL



Meet the Creators

TEBELAK WAS BORN IN BERA, OHIO AND GRADUATED FROM BERA HIGH SCHOOL IN 1966. HIS PARENTS WERE GENEVIEVE AND JOHN TEBELAK, AND HE HAD ONE SISTER.

HE FIRST PRODUCED GODSPELL AS HIS MASTER'S THESIS, UNDER LAWRENCE CARRA, AT CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY IN DECEMBER 1970. HE HAD BEEN STUDYING GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGY, BUT BECAME FASCINATED BY THE JOY EXPRESSED IN THE GOSPELS, WITH THE DEADLINE FOR HIS THESIS TWO WEEKS AWAY. HE ATTENDED AN EASTER VIGIL SERVICE IN 1970 AT PITTSBURGH'S ST. PAUL CATHEDRAL, WEARING HIS USUAL OVERALLS AND A T-SHIRT. A POLICE OFFICER FRISKED HIM FOR DRUGS AFTER THE SERVICE. HE WROTE, OF THIS EXPERIENCE, "I LEFT WITH THE FEELING THAT, RATHER THAN ROLLING THE ROCK AWAY FROM THE TOMB, THEY WERE PILING MORE ON. I WENT HOME, TOOK OUT MY MANUSCRIPT, AND WORKED IT TO COMPLETION IN A NON-STOP FRENZY." THOUGH HE NEVER COMPLETED HIS COURSEWORK AT THE UNIVERSITY, CARNEGIE MELLON DID AWARD HIM A DEGREE.

HE THEN DIRECTED PRODUCTIONS OF GODSPELL AT LA MAMA EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB, THE CHERRY LANE THEATRE, THE PROMENADE THEATRE, AND ON BROADWAY. HE WAS NAMED THEATRE MAN OF THE YEAR BY ELLIOTT NORTON OF THE BOSTON RECORD AMERICAN, AND MOST PROMISING DIRECTOR OF 1971 BY THE NEW YORK DRAMA DESK. HE WAS ALSO NAMED AN OUTSTANDING OHIOAN BY THEN-GOVERNOR JOHN J. GILLIGAN. FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF GODSPELL, HE CONTRIBUTED FUNDING TO A NUMBER OF PRODUCTIONS AT LA MAMA, INCLUDING PAUL FOSTER'S SILVER QUEEN SALOON (1978); WILLIAM M. HOFFMAN'S A BOOK OF ETIQUETTE (1978); STEVEN MARGOSHES, GEROME RAGNI, AND JAMES RADO'S JACK SOUND (1978); TADEUSZ KANTOR'S THE DEAD CLASS (1979); WINSTON TONG IN TWO PIECES (1979); ANDREI SERBAN AND ELIZABETH SWADOS' FRAGMENTS OF A TRILOGY; ROSALYN DREXLER'S VULGAR LIVES (1979); MEREDITH MONK'S RECENT RUINS (1979); AND RON TAVEL'S NUTCRACKER IN THE LAND OF NUTS (1979/1980).

TEBELAK DIRECTED THE BROADWAY PLAY ELIZABETH I IN 1972, THE OFF-BROADWAY PLAY THE GLORIOUS ONE IN 1975, AND KA-BOOM! IN 1980. HE ALSO DIRECTED LOPE DE VEGA'S FUENTE OVEJUNA IN MADRID IN 1975. HE CO-WROTE THE 1973 FILM VERSION OF GODSPELL WITH DAVID GREENE.

TEBELAK ONCE SAID THAT HE "WALKED INTO A THEATRE AT THE AGE OF NINE AND STAYED THERE." HE WAS A LIFELONG MEMBER OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CONSIDERED BECOMING A PRIEST, AND MAY HAVE ATTENDED AN EPISCOPAL SEMINARY FOR A TIME. HE WAS DRAMATURGE FOR THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE IN NEW YORK CITY AND STAGED LITURGICAL DRAMA THERE. ACCORDING TO REVEREND JAMES PARKS MORTON, "WHETHER IT WAS A SERMON SERIES OR A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, HE TURNED IT INTO THEATER."

IN 1980, TEBELAK WAS SUED IN NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT BY HIS FORMER LIVE-IN COMPANION, RICHARD HANNUM. HANNUM WAS REPRESENTED BY FAMED DIVORCE LAWYER MARVIN MITCHELSON, AND WAS WORKING WITH NORMAN MAILER ON AN ADAPTATION OF A PLAY ABOUT MARILYN MONROE CALLED STRAWHEAD. THE LAWSUIT WAS AN EARLY EFFORT TO DEFINE THE RIGHTS OF COHABITING HOMOSEXUAL COUPLES.

TEBELAK RETURNED TO HIS HOMETOWN OF BERA, OHIO, TO DIRECT THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY PRODUCTION OF GODSPELL AT THE BERA SUMMER THEATER IN THE SUMMER OF 1980. HE SUBSEQUENTLY DIRECTED CABARET THERE IN THE SUMMER OF 1981. HE DIRECTED A REVIVAL OF GODSPELL AT LA MAMA IN 1981 AND THEN ANOTHER REVIVAL PRODUCTION BILLED AS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION PRODUCTION IN LOS ANGELES IN DECEMBER 1981 WITH THE MAJORITY OF HIS ORIGINAL NEW YORK CAST. IN 1983, HE DIRECTED DIVERSIONS: OR PROOF THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO LIVE, BASED ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF FRANZ KAFKA, WRITTEN BY AUBREY SIMPSON, AND STARRING MICHAEL MAYER, AT LA MAMA.

TEBELAK DIED AT HIS HOME IN MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY ON APRIL 2, 1985, OF A HEART ATTACK.



*John-Michael
Tebelak*

SCHWARTZ WAS BORN TO A JEWISH FAMILY IN NEW YORK CITY, WHILE ATTENDING CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY. SCHWARTZ COMPOSED AND DIRECTED AN EARLY VERSION OF PIPPIN (ENTITLED PIPPIN, PIPPIN) WITH THE STUDENT-RUN THEATRE GROUP, SCOTCHIN'SODA. SCHWARTZ GRADUATED FROM CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY IN 1968 WITH A BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS IN DRAMA.

UPON RETURNING TO NEW YORK CITY, SCHWARTZ WENT TO WORK AS A PRODUCER FOR RCA RECORDS, BUT SHORTLY THEREAFTER BEGAN TO WORK IN BROADWAY THEATRE. HE WAS ASKED TO BE THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR OF THE FIRST AMERICAN ROCK OPERA, THE SURVIVAL OF ST. JOAN. HE WAS CREDITED AS THE PRODUCER OF THE DOUBLE ALBUM OF THE SOUNDTRACK WITH THE PROGRESSIVE ROCK GROUP SMOKE RISE ON PARAMOUNT RECORDS. HIS FIRST MAJOR CREDIT WAS THE TITLE SONG FOR THE PLAY BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE.

IN 1971, HE WROTE MUSIC AND LYRICS FOR GODSPELL, FOR WHICH HE WON SEVERAL AWARDS, INCLUDING TWO GRAMMYS. FOR THIS MUSICAL'S TORONTO PRODUCTION IN 1972, HE ASKED PAUL SHAFFER TO BE THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR, THUS STARTING SHAFFER'S CAREER. GODSPELL WAS FOLLOWED BY THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TEXTS, IN COLLABORATION WITH LEONARD BERNSTEIN, FOR BERNSTEIN'S MASS, WHICH OPENED THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS IN WASHINGTON, DC. IN 1972, THE LONG-RUNNING PIPPIN PREMIERED ON BROADWAY. SCHWARTZ HAD BEGUN WRITING SONGS FOR PIPPIN WHILE IN COLLEGE, ALTHOUGH NONE OF THE SONGS FROM THE COLLEGE VERSION ENDED UP IN THE BROADWAY PRODUCTION. BOTH PIPPIN AND GODSPELL CONTINUE TO BE FREQUENTLY PRODUCED.

TWO YEARS AFTER PIPPIN DEBUTED, SCHWARTZ WROTE MUSIC AND LYRICS OF THE MAGIC SHOW, WHICH RAN FOR JUST UNDER 2000 PERFORMANCES. BY MID-1974, AT AGE 26, SCHWARTZ HAD THREE SMASH HIT MUSICALS PLAYING IN NEW YORK SIMULTANEOUSLY. NEXT WERE THE MUSIC AND LYRICS OF THE BAKER'S WIFE, WHICH CLOSED BEFORE REACHING BROADWAY AFTER AN OUT-OF-TOWN TRYOUT TOUR IN 1976. HOWEVER, THE CAST ALBUM WENT ON TO ATTAIN CULT STATUS, WHICH LED TO SEVERAL SUBSEQUENT PRODUCTIONS, INCLUDING A LONDON PRODUCTION DIRECTED BY TREVOR NUNN IN 1990 AND ANOTHER AT THE PAPER MILL PLAYHOUSE IN NEW JERSEY IN 2005.

Steven Schwartz

IN 1978, SCHWARTZ'S NEXT BROADWAY PROJECT WAS A MUSICAL VERSION OF STUDS TERKEL'S WORKING, WHICH HE ADAPTED AND DIRECTED, WINNING THE DRAMA DESK AWARD AS BEST DIRECTOR, AND FOR WHICH HE CONTRIBUTED FOUR SONGS. HE ALSO CO-DIRECTED THE TELEVISION PRODUCTION, WHICH WAS PRESENTED AS PART OF THE PBS AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE SERIES. IN 1977, SCHWARTZ WROTE A CHILDREN'S BOOK CALLED THE PERFECT PEACH. IN THE 1980S, SCHWARTZ WROTE SONGS FOR A ONE-ACT MUSICAL FOR CHILDREN, THE TRIP, WHICH 20 YEARS LATER WAS REVISED, EXPANDED AND PRODUCED AS CAPTAIN LOUIE. HE THEN WROTE MUSIC FOR THREE OF THE SONGS OF THE OFF-BROADWAY REVUE PERSONALS, AND LYRICS TO CHARLES STROUSE'S MUSIC FOR THE MUSICAL RAGS.

IN 1991, SCHWARTZ WROTE THE MUSIC AND LYRICS FOR THE MUSICAL CHILDREN OF EDEN. HE THEN BEGAN WORKING IN FILM, COLLABORATING WITH COMPOSER ALAN MENKEN ON THE SCORES FOR THE DISNEY ANIMATED FEATURES POCAHONTAS (1995), FOR WHICH HE RECEIVED TWO ACADEMY AWARDS, AND THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME (1996). HE PROVIDED SONGS FOR DREAMWORKS' FIRST MUSICAL ANIMATED FEATURE, THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (1998), WINNING ANOTHER ACADEMY AWARD FOR THE SONG "WHEN YOU BELIEVE". HE WROTE MUSIC AND LYRICS FOR THE ORIGINAL TELEVISION MUSICAL, GEPPETTO (2000), SEEN ON THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF DISNEY. A STAGE ADAPTATION OF THIS PIECE PREMIERED IN JUNE 2006 AT THE COTERIE THEATRE IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, AND WAS TITLED GEPPETTO AND SON, AND IS NOW KNOWN AS DISNEY'S MY SON PINOCCHIO: GEPPETTO'S MUSICAL TALE.

IN 2003, SCHWARTZ RETURNED TO BROADWAY, AS COMPOSER AND LYRICIST FOR WICKED, A MUSICAL BASED ON THE NOVEL WICKED: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE WICKED WITCH OF THE WEST, WHICH TELLS THE STORY OF THE OZ CHARACTERS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE WITCHES. SCHWARTZ WON A GRAMMY AWARD FOR HIS WORK AS COMPOSER AND LYRICIST AND PRODUCER OF WICKED'S CAST RECORDING. ON MARCH 23, 2006, THE BROADWAY PRODUCTION OF WICKED PASSED THE 1000 PERFORMANCE MARK, MAKING SCHWARTZ ONE OF FOUR COMPOSERS (THE OTHER THREE BEING ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER, JERRY HERMAN, AND RICHARD RODGERS) TO HAVE THREE SHOWS LAST THAT LONG ON BROADWAY (THE OTHER TWO WERE PIPPIN AND THE MAGIC SHOW). IN 2007, SCHWARTZ JOINED JERRY HERMAN AS BEING ONE OF ONLY TWO COMPOSER/LYRICISTS TO HAVE THREE SHOWS RUN LONGER THAN 1500 PERFORMANCES ON BROADWAY.

AFTER WICKED, SCHWARTZ CONTRIBUTED MUSIC AND LYRICS FOR A NEW MUSICAL THAT WAS COMMISSIONED TO CELEBRATE THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE BIRTH OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. THE PRODUCTION, TITLED MIT EVENTYR OR "MY FAIRYTALE", OPENED AT THE GLADSAXE THEATRE IN COPENHAGEN IN THE FALL OF 2005.

SCHWARTZ RETURNED TO HOLLYWOOD IN 2007 AND WROTE LYRICS FOR THE HIT DISNEY FILM ENCHANTED, AGAIN COLLABORATING WITH MENKEN.

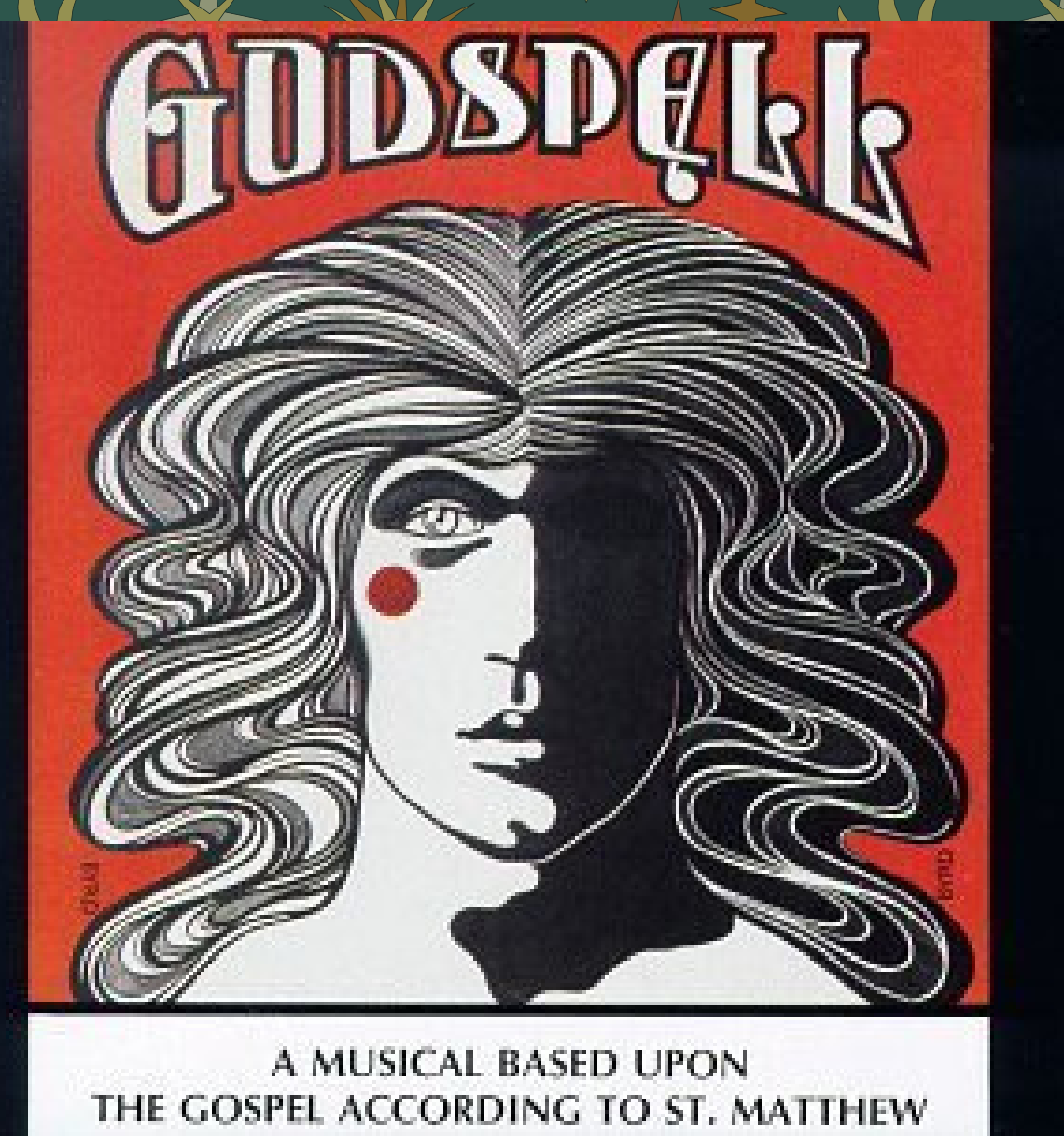
IN SEPTEMBER 2011, THE NORTHLIGHT THEATRE IN CHICAGO PREMIERED SCHWARTZ'S NEW MUSICAL, SNAPSHOTS, WHICH FEATURED MUSIC AND LYRICS BY SCHWARTZ, BOOK BY DAVID STERN, AND WAS DIRECTED BY KEN SAWYER. IT BLENDED TOGETHER "SOME OF THE BEST-LOVED MUSIC WITH SOME OF THE GENUINELY WONDERFUL LESSER KNOWN GEMS OF (THE) RENOWNED BROADWAY COMPOSER."

SCHWARTZ RETURNED TO WRITE THE LYRICS FOR A SEQUEL TO ENCHANTED, TITLED DISENCHANTED, AND WILL DO THE SAME FOR A LIVE-ACTION REMAKE OF THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME.

Production History

1970 - Carnegie Mellon University

JOHN-MICHAEL TEBELAK WROTE THE FIRST VERSION OF GODSPELL AS HIS MASTER'S THESIS AT CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY. THE CARNEGIE MELLON CAST INCLUDED (LISTED IN SPEAKING ORDER): ANDREW ROHRER, MARY MAZZIOTTI, MARTHA JACOBS, ROBIN LAMONT, ROBERT MILLER, SONIA MANZANO, STANLEY KING, RANDY DANSON, JAMES STEVENS, AND DAVID HASKELL WITH ORIGINAL MUSIC BY DUANE BOLICK. THIS VERSION WAS PERFORMED AT CARNEGIE MELLON IN 1970 BY STUDENTS FROM CARNEGIE MELLON'S THEATRE DEPARTMENT.



1971 - La MaMa & Off-Broadway

THE SHOW WAS THEN BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF PRODUCERS EDGAR LANSBURY (BROTHER OF ANGELA LANSBURY), JOSEPH BERUH, AND STUART DUNCAN BY CARNEGIE MELLON ALUMNUS AND ASSOCIATE PRODUCER CHARLES HAID, WHO WANTED TO TRANSFER THE SHOW TO OFF-BROADWAY. THE SHOW WAS FIRST PRODUCED AT LA MAMA AS A PLAY WITH ORIGINAL MUSIC FOR EIGHT SONGS BY DUANE BOLICK, JEFFREY MYLETT, WHO ADDED ONE OF HIS SONGS ("THE RAVEN AND THE SWAN") AND PEGGY GORDON AND JAY HAMBURGER, WHO ADDED "BY MY SIDE". THE PRODUCERS THEN HIRED STEPHEN SCHWARTZ, ANOTHER CARNEGIE MELLON ALUMNUS, TO RE-SCORE THE SHOW. SCHWARTZ'S SCORE INCORPORATED A VARIETY OF MUSICAL GENRES, INCLUDING POP, FOLK ROCK, GOSPEL, AND VAUDEVILLE. "BY MY SIDE", WRITTEN BY CARNEGIE MELLON STUDENTS JAY HAMBURGER AND PEGGY GORDON, WAS KEPT FROM THE ORIGINAL SCORE. AS IN THE ORIGINAL SCORE, MOST OF THE LYRICS NOT WRITTEN BY SCHWARTZ WERE FROM THE EPISCOPAL HYMNAL. THE SHOW OPENED AS A MUSICAL AT THE CHERRY LANE THEATRE ON MAY 17, 1971. IT TRANSFERRED TO THE PROMENADE THEATRE THREE MONTHS LATER, AND CLOSED ON JUNE 13, 1976, AFTER 2,124 PERFORMANCES AT THE PROMENADE. THIS PRODUCTION WAS DIRECTED BY TEBELAK, AND THE ORIGINAL CAST INCLUDED LAMAR ALFORD, PEGGY GORDON, DAVID HASKELL, JOANNE JONAS, ROBIN LAMONT, SONIA MANZANO, GILMER MCCORMICK, JEFFREY MYLETT, STEPHEN NATHAN, AND HERB BRAHA (SIMON). THE BAND INCLUDED JESSE CUTLER ON GUITAR AND BASS, RICHARD LABONTE ON BASS, STEPHEN REINHARDT ON KEYBOARDS, AND RICKY SHUTTER ON PERCUSSION. IN LATE 1971, LABONTE WAS REPLACED BY BASSIST STEVE MANES WHEN TWO OF THE ORIGINAL MUSICIANS, SHUTTER AND LABONTE, WENT WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE ORIGINAL CAST TO THE MARK TAPER FORUM IN LOS ANGELES TO OPEN THE SHOW THERE. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LABONTE, THEY ALL RETURNED TO THE PROMENADE IN JANUARY 1972.

1972 - Toronto

THE 1972-1973 TORONTO PRODUCTION OPENED AT THE ROYAL ALEXANDRA THEATRE AND WAS INTENDED TO BE A RUN OF A FEW DOZEN PERFORMANCES FOR A SUBSCRIPTION AUDIENCE. THE CAST WAS DRAWN ENTIRELY FROM LOCAL PERFORMERS, INSTEAD OF A TOURING CAST. AFTER AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE FROM THE AUDIENCE, THE SCHEDULED RUN AT THE ROYAL ALEXANDRA ENDED AND THE SHOW MOVED UPTOWN TO THE BAYVIEW PLAYHOUSE IN LEASIDE. THE BAYVIEW PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTION RAN UNTIL AUGUST 1973, WITH A THEN-RECORD RUN OF 488 PERFORMANCES. THE TORONTO PRODUCTION LAUNCHED THE CAREERS OF MANY ACTORS, INCLUDING VICTOR GARBER, EUGENE LEVY, ANDREA MARTIN, GILDA RADNER, DAVE THOMAS, AND MARTIN SHORT, AS WELL AS THE SHOW'S MUSICAL DIRECTOR, PAUL SHAFFER.



1976 - Broadway

THE FIRST BROADWAY PRODUCTION OPENED ON JUNE 22, 1976, AT THE BROADHURST THEATRE. IT WAS DIRECTED BY JOHN MICHAEL TEBELAK, WITH STEVE REINHARDT AS MUSICAL DIRECTOR, COSTUMES BY SUSAN TSU, LIGHTING BY SPENCER MOSSE, AND SOUND BY ROBERT MINOR. THE OPENING CAST FEATURED LAMAR ALFORD, LAURIE FASO, LOIS FORAKER, ROBIN LAMONT, ELIZABETH LATHRAM, BOBBY LEE, TOM ROLFING, DON SCARDINO, MARLEY SIMS, AND VALERIE WILLIAMS. KERIN BLAIR, BOB GARRETT, MICHAEL HOIT, AND KITTY REA WERE UNDERSTUDIES. THE BAND CONSISTED OF PAUL SHAFFER (KEYBOARDS, CONDUCTOR), MARK ZERAY (GUITAR), CHRIS WARWIN (BASS), AND MICHAEL REDDING (PERCUSSION). THE SHOW TRANSFERRED TO THE PLYMOUTH THEATRE, THEN TO THE AMBASSADOR THEATRE, WHERE IT CLOSED ON SEPTEMBER 4, 1977, AFTER 5 PREVIEWS AND 527 PERFORMANCES.



2000 - Off-Broadway

GODSPELL WAS REVIVED OFF-BROADWAY AT THE YORK THEATRE FROM AUGUST 2 TO OCTOBER 7, 2000. CAST MEMBERS INCLUDED SHOSHANA BEAN, TIM CAIN, CATHERINE COX, WILL ERAT, BARRETT FOA, LUCIA GIANNETTA, CAPATHIA JENKINS, CHAD KIMBALL, LESLIE KRITZER AND ELISEO ROMAN.



2011 - Broadway Revival

THE FIRST BROADWAY REVIVAL OPENED FOR PREVIEWS ON OCTOBER 13, 2011, AT THE CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE THEATRE, AND OFFICIALLY OPENED ON NOVEMBER 7, 2011, TO MIXED REVIEWS. THEATRE REVIEW AGGREGATOR CURTAIN CRITIC GAVE THE PRODUCTION A SCORE OF 63/100, BASED ON THE OPINIONS OF EIGHTEEN CRITICS. THE PRODUCTION FEATURED HUNTER PARRISH, WALLACE SMITH, ANNA MARIA PEREZ DE TAGLE, CELISSE HENDERSON, TELLY LEUNG, GEORGE SALAZAR, MORGAN JAMES, UZO ADUBA, NICK BLAEMIRE, AND LINDSAY MENDEZ, AND WAS DIRECTED BY DANIEL GOLDSTEIN, CHOREOGRAPHED BY CHRISTOPHER GATTELLI, AND PRODUCED BY KEN DAVENPORT. ON APRIL 17, 2012, CORBIN BLEU TOOK OVER THE ROLE OF JESUS. THE 2011 CAST RECORDING WAS RELEASED DIGITALLY ON DECEMBER 20, 2011, AND IN STORES ON JANUARY 31, 2012. THE PRODUCTION CLOSED ON JUNE 24, 2012.

2020 - Berkshire Theatre Group

GODSPELL BECAME THE FIRST LIVE SHOW TO BE APPROVED BY THE ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. THIS PRODUCTION, WHICH WAS PERFORMED IN A TENT IN THE BERKSHIRE THEATRE GROUP'S PARKING LOT, FEATURED NICHOLAS EDWARDS, TIM JONES, ALEX GETLIN, MICHAEL WARTELLA, ZACH WILLIAMS, DAN ROSALES, BRANDON LEE, EMILY KOCH, ISABEL JORDAN, NAJAH HETSBERGER AND KIMBERLY EMMANUEL. INSTEAD OF THE STANDARD OPENING TO THE SHOW, WHICH FEATURES THE SONG, "TOWER OF BABBLE," THE ACTORS OF THE SHOW SHARED HOW THEIR LIVES WERE UNIQUELY IMPACTED BY THE PANDEMIC. THE SHOW, WHICH HAD THE AUDIENCE SITTING TEN FEET AWAY FROM THE ACTORS ON STAGE (WHO WERE SOCIALLY DISTANCED THEMSELVES) REQUIRED THAT EVERY AUDIENCE MEMBER WEAR A FACIAL COVERING FOR THE DURATION OF THE PERFORMANCE. THIS PRODUCTION BROUGHT UP THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE SOCIALLY DISTANCED THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS IN THE FUTURE. THE SHOW RAN FROM AUGUST 6, 2020, UNTIL SEPTEMBER 20, 2020.

Movie vs Musical

THE SONG "BEAUTIFUL CITY" WAS WRITTEN FOR AND FIRST INCLUDED IN THE FILM, WHILE THE SONGS "LEARN YOUR LESSONS WELL" AND "WE BESEECH THEE" WERE OMITTED. THE MELODY FOR "LEARN YOUR LESSONS WELL" IS USED BRIEFLY IN AN EARLY SCENE OF THE FILM AND AGAIN AS INCIDENTAL MUSIC, AND SNIPPETS OF BOTH "LEARN YOUR LESSONS WELL" AND "WE BESEECH THEE" ARE HEARD IN THE SCENE INSIDE CHERRY LANE THEATRE WHEN JESUS PLAYS THEIR MELODIES ON THE PIANO DURING THE STORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

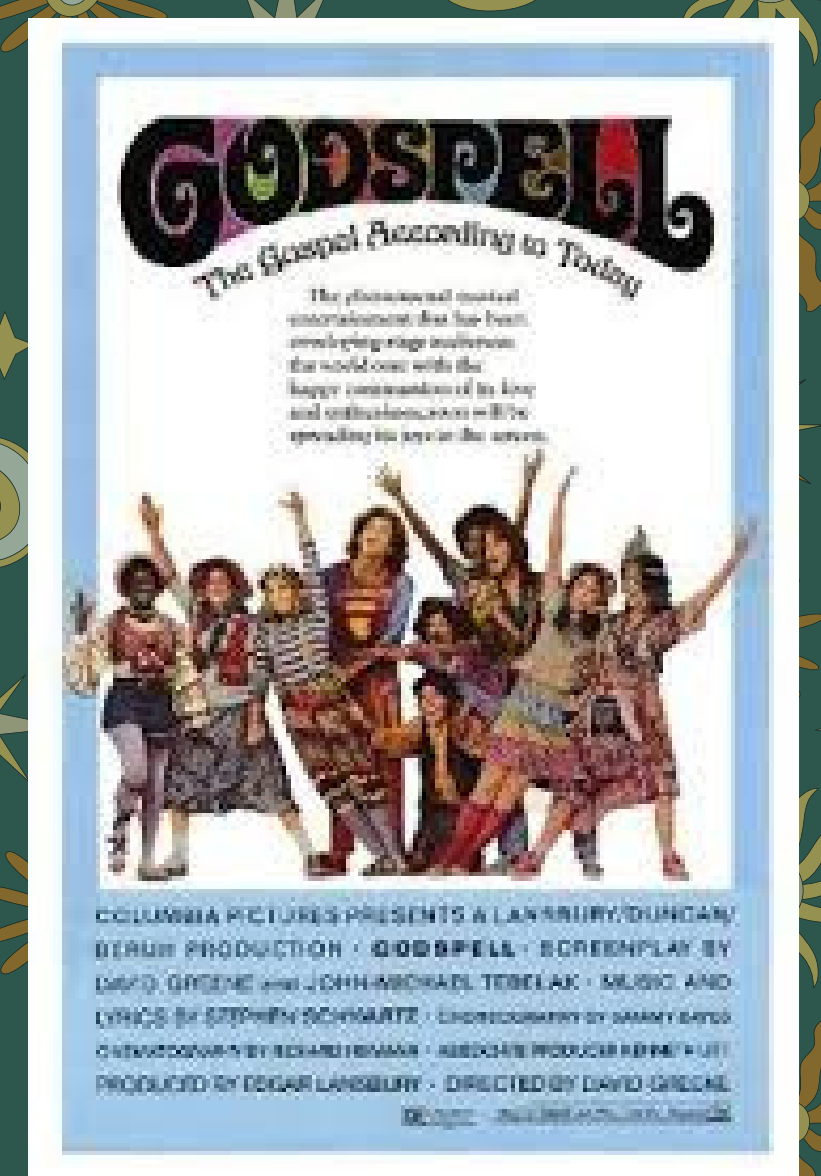
WHILE THE PLAY REQUIRES VERY LITTLE STAGE DRESSING, THE FILM PLACES EMPHASIS ON DRAMATIC LOCATION SHOTS IN MANHATTAN. (EXCEPT FOR THE OPENING SCENES AND THE FINAL SCENE, THE CITY STREETS AND PARKS ARE DEVOID OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN THE CAST.) LOCATIONS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE, WHERE JOHN THE BAPTIST WALKS DOWN THE PEDESTRIAN WALKWAY WHILE HUMMING "PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD" IN THE OPENING SEQUENCE;
- BETHESDA FOUNTAIN IN CENTRAL PARK, IN WHICH THE NEW DISCIPLES ARE BAPTIZED BY JOHN WHILE SINGING "PREPARE YE";
- THE ANDREW CARNEGIE MANSION, IN WHICH THEY SING "TURN BACK, O MAN";
- TIMES SQUARE, WHERE JESUS AND JOHN ARE SILHOUETTED BY A SCREEN OF LIGHTS AS THEY DANCE TO "ALL FOR THE BEST";
- THE CENTRAL FOUNTAIN AT LINCOLN CENTER, WHERE JESUS AND JUDAS DANCE ON THE FOUNTAIN'S STONE LIP AS THEY SING "ALL FOR THE BEST";
- THE TOP OF NORTH TOWER OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER, WHICH WAS NEARING COMPLETION AT THE TIME OF THE FILM'S PRODUCTION;
- THE SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT ON RIVERSIDE DRIVE;
- A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF FIFTH AVENUE FROM ABOVE AND BEHIND ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, LOOKING DOWN ON THE TISHMAN BUILDING DURING "BEAUTIFUL CITY";
- THE EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR OF THE CHERRY LANE THEATRE - WHERE THE FIRST MUSICAL VERSION OF GODSPELL BEGAN ITS OFF-BROADWAY RUN THE YEAR BEFORE THE FILM WAS SHOW - WHERE THE STORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON IS TOLD.
- THE LONG APPROACHES OF THE HELL GATE BRIDGE ON RANDALL'S ISLAND, WHERE THE DISCIPLES SWITCH TO THEIR COLORFUL CLOTHING AFTER BAPTISM NEAR THE START OF THE FILM, AND WHERE THEY CARRY JESUS' BODY THROUGH THE ARCHES, CREATING A BARREL-VAULTED CATHEDRAL EFFECT, AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION ON A CHAIN-LINK FENCE.

VOCALLY, THE CHORUS IS VERY MUCH IN THE SAME STYLE, BUT SOLO PARTS ARE, AT TIMES, MORE LYRICAL. NOTABLY, IN "ALL GOOD GIFTS", WHEREAS LAMAR ALFORD HAD USED A DRAMATIC TENOR VOICE, MERRELL JACKSON USES A LIGHTER VOICE AND FALSETTO FOR THE HIGH ORNAMENT, WHICH CREATES A JOYOUS EFFECT.

REGARDING THE BAND, ALL FOUR OF THE MUSICIANS FROM THE ORIGINAL STAGE PRODUCTION AND CAST ALBUM WERE RETAINED FOR THE FILM RECORDING. THESE MUSICIANS WERE STEVE REINHARDT ON KEYBOARDS, JESSE CUTLER ON ACOUSTIC AND LEAD GUITAR AND BASS, RICHARD LABONTE ON RHYTHM GUITAR AND BASS, AND RICKY SHUTTER ON DRUMS AND PERCUSSION. REVIEWER WILLIAM RUHLMANN EXPLAINS THAT BY HAVING A LARGER BUDGET THAN HAD BEEN AVAILABLE FOR THE STAGE, SCHWARTZ WAS ABLE TO EXPAND THE LINE-UP BY ADDING KEY STUDIO PERSONNEL SUCH AS LEAD GUITARIST HUGH MCCRACKEN (ON "PREPARE YE (THE WAY OF THE LORD)"), KEYBOARDIST PAUL SHAFFER, BASS PLAYER STEVE MANES, A HORN SECTION, AND SIX STRINGS.

RUHLMANN DESCRIBES SCHWARTZ AS BEING "BETTER ABLE TO REALIZE THE SCORE'S POP TENDENCIES THAN HE HAD ON THE CAST ALBUM... THIS WAS A LESS COMPLETE VERSION OF THE SCORE, BUT IT WAS MUCH BETTER PERFORMED AND PRODUCED, MAKING THIS A RARE INSTANCE IN WHICH THE SOUNDTRACK ALBUM IS BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL CAST ALBUM."



Characters

JESUS

HIGH ENERGY, CHARMING, FUNNY, GENTLE BUT WITH STRENGTH. HE IS THE SORT OF PERSON OTHERS INSTINCTIVELY FOLLOW.

JOHN THE BAPTIST/JUDAS

HE HAS ATTRIBUTES OF BOTH BIBLICAL FIGURES: HE IS BOTH JESUS' LIEUTENANT AND MOST ARDENT DISCIPLE AND THE DOUBTER WHO BEGINS TO QUESTION AND REBEL. LIKE JESUS, HE IS ALSO CHARISMATIC, BUT IN MORE OF AN OVERT REVOLUTIONARY WAY. USUALLY PLAYED BY SOMEONE HANDSOME AND MASCULINE, WITH AN UNDERTONE OF SEXUALITY. HE IS THE MOST "SERIOUS" AND INTELLECTUAL OF THE GROUP, THOUGH AS WITH ALL THE ACTORS, HE MUST STILL POSSESS A GOOD SENSE OF PHYSICAL COMEDY.

NICK

VERY HIGH ENERGY. IMPISH AND PLAYFUL. IN THE ORIGINAL, HE PLAYED SEVERAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, INCLUDING CONCERTINA, RECORDER, AND GUITAR.

TELLY

NOT THE BRIGHTEST IN THE BUNCH, HE IS A LITTLE SLOW ON THE UPTAKE. BUT THERE IS A GREAT SWEETNESS AND INNOCENCE ABOUT HIM. BECAUSE HE SINGS "ALL GOOD GIFTS," HE MUST BE A VERY GOOD SINGER.

GEORGE

THE COMEDIAN, THE CLASS CLOWN. THE GUY WHO CAN DO A HUNDRED VOICES AND IMITATIONS.

ANNA MARIA

A BIT OF A TOMBOY, BUT BASICALLY OPEN AND SWEET. PERHAPS THE YOUNGEST OF THE GROUP. SHE IS THE FIRST OF THE GROUP TO COMMIT TO FOLLOWING JESUS IN THE SONG "DAY BY DAY."

LINDSAY

THE CONFIDENT ONE, THE SHOW-OFF. THE FIRST ONE TO VOLUNTEER, SOMETIMES SHE JUMPS IN BEFORE SHE REALLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT'S GOING ON.

UZO

THE SHY ONE. SOMETIMES A LITTLE SLOW TO GET THINGS, BUT WHEN SHE DOES, SHE COMMITS ALL THE WAY. HAS AN "EARTH MOTHER" KIND OF WARMTH TO HER.

MORGAN

SASSY AND SLIGHTLY CYNICAL, THE MOST URBAN OF THE GROUP. ALSO THE "SEXY" ONE, BUT HER SEXINESS CONTAINS A LARGE ELEMENT OF PUT-ON, IN THE MANNER OF MAE WEST OR MADONNA (WHO IN FACT ONCE PLAYED THIS ROLE.)

CELISSE

THE FEMALE EQUIVALENT OF THE CLASS CLOWN. GOOFY AND A CUT-UP. IN THE 2012 BROADWAY REVIVAL, SHE PLAYED SEVERAL INSTRUMENTS, INCLUDING CONGA, UKULELE, AND GUITAR.